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MEMOIRS AND RESOLUTIONS

OF

ADAM GRAEME,

OF MOSSGRAY.

INCLUDING SOME CHRONICLES OF THE BOROUGH OF FENDIE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"PASSAGES IN THE LIFE OF MRS. MARGARET MAITLAND,"
"MERKLAND," AND "CALEB FIELD."

Second Edition.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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BOOK I.

THE HISTORY OF ADAM GRAEME.

. . . . To some kind of men
Their graces serve them but as enemies.
. . . . Your virtues, gentle Master,
Are sanctified and holy traitors to you.

AS YOU LIKE IT.

ADAM GRAEME

OF

MOSSGRAY.

CHAPTER I.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting
The soul that rises with us, our Life's star—
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar—
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home.

WORDSWORTH.

THE first thing which I can record concerning myself is, that I was born.

That I was born! I who now sit in

this remote and solitary study, of whose mysteries my good neighbours speak reverently with doubt and wonder, encompassed with things immortal!—the everlasting elements without, the stream, the hills, the fruitful earth, which has been and shall be until the end of time; within with things of life, instinct and inherent, fated perchance to live longer than this present world, the books of men—the Book of God—that out of darkness and sleep and unconsciousness, I was born!

These are wonderful words. This life, to which neither time nor eternity can bring diminution—this everlasting living soul, *began*. My mind loses itself in these depths. Strangely significant and solemn are the commonest phrases of our humanity; the words which veil the constant marvels of our miraculous life!

But this of "he was born" is greater in my eyes, than that other of "he died." Say you he died? say rather, he has changed his garments, has put off a fading robe, which by and bye—perchance a time as short in Heaven's account as are these fleeting days to us—he shall put on again, to wear for ever. But in yonder anxious house, in yonder dim room, with life's plaintive music rising on his unconscious ear, in wailing and tears its natural utterance, this wonderful soul began. Be solemn in your rejoicing, ye new mothers, ye glad attendant friends; for this that hath come into the world shall abide for ever, this new existence is beyond the breath or touch of death, a thing immortal, a presence which shall outlive the world.

I was born sadly, in gloom which none broke by the voice of thanksgiving, for

the two greatest things of human life met in my birth-hour. I entered the world, a fit entrance for my long, clouded course; and solemnly in pain and grief, my mother went forth to the other country. My young, fair, gentle mother, of whom I think now as of some beautiful dream that crossed me in my youth.

My father was a hard man, who loved the world; but I used to hear long ago that this moved him. Most deeply all my life has it moved me, who never knew the girl who was my mother. She has been a vision hovering about me all my days; saintly and mother-like when I was young, but now, in her pale beauty resembling more a dead child of the old man who is her son.

I dwell upon this perhaps too often, when I am sad—and I am truly sad too often, for I am alone; but it is surely well and

blessed to preserve in the safe keeping of death this holy fragrance of youth. The years that have mossed her grave, and made the blood thin and chill in my old veins, have brought no change to her—she is young for ever.

My father was a Graeme of Mossgray. In our own Southland district we are chief of the name; but he did not esteem the traditional honour that belonged to the title—it was mere idle breath to him. The principal part of his life was spent in a distant city. He laboured without ceasing, for I know not what reason. I fancy there had been some ambition in him to accumulate one of those fairy fortunes, which very prosaic and ordinary men do achieve sometimes, though what end he proposed to himself in attaining this, I cannot tell, for he himself was becoming old, and I was nothing to him; even

as the heir of his name he bestowed no regard on me; for the name itself was indifferent. He would have thrown it into the scale with any piece of merchandise, and known himself nothing the poorer.

But a spell was upon this fortune of his, so constantly pursued. His prosperity never passed a certain limit. It was as though some malicious spirit had the guiding of his fate in this respect, in vengeance of better blessings unused and slighted. He always began with success and good fortune; the delusive promise lasted long enough to lure him deeper and deeper into the snare, and then the tide began to swell and turn, and on its rising waves his hopes went bitterly out into the blank and cheerless sea. It was a sad fate, and had his objects been worthier, a fate to be deeply sympathised with; but the man was a hard man (I scarcely knew

him, though he was my father); and was susceptible to no grief but this. That discipline, wise as it must be, most hard as it is always, which strikes us through our dearest things, could not touch him except in those outward matters of wealth and mercantile credit, which to him were all in all; and on these accordingly the stroke fell.

So heavily it came at last, that in his wilful selfishness he resolved to sell Mossgray. There was no one living to plead for me, a child then, scarcely daring to lift up my eyes in his presence, and for my right to this inheritance, descended from many upright fathers to whom its very name and local place were dearer than fortune. But death stepped in again to save for me a home—a home which has been to me a blessed inheritance, a solace in the midst of some evils —from other some a refuge and a shelter.

I was a solitary child, allowed in this lonely house of Mossgray to grow up, neglected and uncared for, as I best could. My childish memories are rich in dreams and spiritual presences, and overshadowed universally by that vague sadness, which dumb as it is, and quiet, is so pitiful in children. I remember how the leaves were wont to fall from the old elms and alders by the waterside, with their eerie and plaintive sound. I remember the low sweeping cadence of the water—the disconsolate autumn breeze—and then comes upon me again the blank childish heaviness—the cloud of childish melancholy, that knew not how it was made sad, nor why.

Mossgray had been a peelhouse—one of those fortified places which the exigencies of Border warfare, predatory and otherwise, made so necessary in our district. A high, square

tower occupies the centre, with narrow windows, and arrow slits piercing its massy wall, which has been of old strong in all needful capabilities of defence, and could yet be a notable hold, if our peaceful Cumberland neighbours took up their warlike trade again.

About the tower cling irregular off-shoots, added by many Lairds of Mossgray since peace became paramount on the Border; in which, it is impossible to deny, my good ancestors have studied convenience more than elegance. Yet the group of buildings high and low, angled and rounded, with the dark and rugged tower rising in the midst, have a charm upon them, greater, as I think, than the fascination of regular beauty. Patches of moss and yellow lichen are on the walls and roof—the grey, thick walls, and sombre slated roof which look themselves like some natural growth of the earth, firmly rooted in

kindly soil. Our doors are many now, and broad and easy of access—for the successive Graemes, who have increased the accommodations of Mossgray, have added entrance to entrance, with a prodigality by no means pleasant when those searching winds are abroad; but we still preserve the harsh and lowering portal, and the heavy iron door, which of old frowned upon unwelcome southern visitors in sullen defiance.

I confess that I have a pleasure in looking upon these—it pleases me to trace historic changes in the aspect of my patrimonial house; that this belongs of natural right to the rugged and sturdy times of Border warfare—that from that gloomy turret with its spiral stair, the golden shield of Scotland was gloomily taken down by one who had fought in her cause, when Mary crossed the Firth on her last fatal journey, to trust the false

courtesies of England. That in this dark chamber, a godly Lady Mossgray sheltered the persecuted hinds and shepherds, whose faith has added them to the ranks of our truest chivalry in Scotland. That this enlarged and decorated hall in the basement of the tower, bears witness to the peace of the third William's reign. That these gradually accumulating walls carry on the chronicle through the less eventful times of modern history—that here we have been dwelling through all vicissitudes prosperous and adverse, in our own land and among our own people for five hundred certain years. These remembrances I acknowledge are dear to me. I lose my own individuality when I leave Mossgray.

And in a vague mist of dreamy romance and childish reverie, these histories hung incumbent on my mind when my dim days began. They lived with me, a host of

mingled times and shapes, more real, as I fancy yet, than the common everyday things I saw around. The chill of cold-heartedness, the absence of truth, strike with a strange blank, unexpressed pain, upon the heart of a child—and from these I turned to dwell, where warriors and Border maidens had dwelt before me, among the true knights and fair ladies of a yearning fancy, whose indefinite pageants and minstrelsies had yet more truth of nature in them, than the hollow external forms of the life that men called real.—

> "Blank misgivings of a creature
> Moving about in worlds not realized,"

oppressed me on all sides then—but I had no misgivings as to the beautiful olden times —they were past, and they were true!

At our feet in this Mossgray runs a water,

of some importance as we flatter ourselves. Flowing downward placid and calm from the hills, it has attained a considerable breadth and volume before it passes our old walls. And, by what chance I know not, our stream has been kept in its native pride of woodland and green banks safe from encroachments of cultivation. We have glades whose grassy undulations and noble solitary trees, might match with any park in England, and we have thickly-wooded deans, closing in arched foliage over our river, with fretting rocks and waterfalls peculiarly our own. Scattered cot-houses to whom this water is a dear companion—quaint and dewy villages lying under the trees, with glimmerings of softened light about them, from the sky above and the stream below. Mills picturesque in their mossy homeliness throwing the drowsy stir of rural labour across the placid water—

these are our friends and neighbours at Mossgray.

Nor do we lack, in our quiet country, inhabitants more distinguished. If I pursue my walk southward for a mile, I come upon a brave stone bridge, spanning with its stately arches the pleasant river; and across the bridge appear the many-coloured roofs of the town of Fendie in their varieties of thatch and slate, and homely red tiles, congregated happily together for mutual friendship and traffic. A very tranquil rural town, along whose streets the sunbeam slants drowsily in summer, with scarce a passing figure to break its brightness; but withal a busy borough, alive with many interests, and esteeming itself in innocent vanity and self-complacence, very far in advance of the simple "country" over which it sways its little sceptre, in all the arts and luxuries of life.

Withal, our water carries ships, and where it pours itself into the Firth, has wealthy fisheries upon its margin, and beholds long ranks of guileful nets, in which its receding waters help the fisherman to snare the glistening grilse and lordly salmon, born by the hundred in its silent caves. Our vessels are of no great burden, and boast but homely names—"Williams" and "Janets," "Johns" and "Marys"—for our ship-owners name their cherished boats after their still more cherished children; but all of them proudly bear the emblazoned name of Fendie. To all of them the Waterfoot is a delicious haven, fragrant with the breath of home.

The grey walls of Mossgray have at all times been home to me—although a quiet and sad one often, to the man no less than to the solitary child they sheltered long ago. I remember well the pensive childish musings

of that time; the dreamy gladness with which I wandered on those bright summer mornings by the pleasant water, my sole friend and playmate then, as it is my best companion now; and that unspeakable loneliness and desolation which came to me on the drooping wing of the plaintive autumn breeze. It is all indefinite and vague now as it was then. The little moralist of ten twelvemonths beginning to think how swiftly those waves of his young life glided by—the meditative, pensive boy looking on while his compeers in years pursued their sports, with his bashful wish to join them, and his sorrowful dreamy thoughts about their unthinking mirth. I recall these as a succession of dim pictures—the history of a beginning life, forlorn as only childhood can be.

CHAPTER II.

Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing boy;
But he beholds the light and whence it flows—
He sees it in his joy.

I DO not quite agree with Wordsworth.

I grant you that there is much in the earlier childhood, indefinite always and vague as twilight dreams, which proclaims the spiritual and infinite to be nearer to these unconscious dawning souls than it is to us. There is the instinct of wonder, which in its eager whys and wherefores, strikes out

intuitions of strange wisdom sometimes, concerning those common mysteries about us, with which, in the invulnerable might of their simplicity, philosophers dare not meddle—

> "The obstinate questionings
> Of sense and outward things;"

the "visionary gleam" which this new inmate of the world throws about unawares from its own strangely luminous soul. I grant you all these in early childhood, but for your boy!

Your healthful boy is given to no manner of musing. He has begun to come in contact with the materialisms of the world, and battles with them lustily, with right good will and daring joyousness. It does not occur to him to tell you of the beauty of this water, but you shall find him eloquent on the subject of his anglings or swimmings

—his feats upon it in boats—his miraculous slides—his inevitable fallings in. The delicate spiritual presence within him has forgotten how, a while ago, it seemed well nigh to touch, in dreamy awe and reverence, those other spiritual presences with which its teeming fancy had peopled the indefinite air everywhere. The warm blood is bounding in his veins in all its first exuberant impulse of life and motion. To construct—to destroy —to fight—to labour—to bend all these material obstructions under the absolute dominion of his strong young human will. To pour forth in boisterous glee, by shout and whoop, by leap and wrestle, by all that is joyous, and wild, and loud enough, the overflowing energy of his youthful powers. Your true boy does not pause in his manifold undertakings to consider natural joys and sunshine. If you would understand his

enjoyment of these, you must see him breast the current as he swims across the river, and swing high up on perilous branches in the wood. His hands are full—let them talk or muse who will—his vocation is other than this.

The boy's hero is the material man—the one single unapproachable Crusoe whom Genius has created for him—the many sailor-men of ruder flesh and blood, militant upon the sea—the hunter of unknown forests—the adventurous traveller of dangerous countries—these are the glorious ideals of the boy. He thirsts to throw the lasso with the fiery sportsman of Mexico, he burns with vain longing to have been one of the olden crew who were shipwrecked with the Byron of the sea. He clenches his hands and sets his teeth in burning indignation, when he reads how the gentle Cook fell in

yon southern island far away, and knows by the valiant blood rising hot to his heart, that had he been there it had chanced otherwise. And if he returns to olden times, it is to fight by the side of Wallace, to row the forlorn boat of the Bruce, to do battle on the muirs for the Covenant, to guide Prince Charles through mountain pass and cavern. When he dreams, it is of the world without —the stirring, fighting, opposing world which is to be quelled, and put down, and tamed into obedience to the young conqueror's will. The sun sheds grateful light upon him, and the moon looks down from her broad skies in vain. If he could fight for her, she might enlist his youthful chivalry, as the Queen of old times, the hapless Mary, like her in lofty beauty, as in disastrous wading through stormy clouds, might have done: but to dream of her—to think of her serene pale

smile—alas, no! he has other work in hand.

I remember I was fishing or appearing to fish one bright morning, in a link of our water, which was a kind of hermitage to me, —I might be twelve years old then—when my father suddenly approached me, leading in his hand a boy of my own years—a boy so differently endowed, so superior to myself as I felt at once in my shy consciousness.

My father visited Mossgray seldom: at this time we had received no intimation of his coming, and the timid constraint and awkward diffidence, which were always upon me in his presence, were heightened into exceeding pain by this sudden appearance.

"Adam," said my father, "this is your cousin Charles. He is to stay with you in future at Mossgray."

My father's own name was Charles; he

looked with favour on his namesake, as he watched our greeting. I so shy and rustic, and Charlie Graeme so bold and manly—I felt how disadvantageous was the comparison.

But when my father left us, and we became acquainted, as we did soon, for my cousin was as frank as I was shy, then the glorious new life of genuine boyhood which burst upon Mossgray and upon me! How I lavished upon Charlie the unsunned treasures of my solitary child's heart; how I awoke out of my dreamy loneliness, to find myself enriched beyond all wealth in his companionship. How I discovered a new charm and attraction in my own beloved water and noble woods, from the wild shout of mirth with which Charlie plunged into riotous enjoyment of them. How the old walls and doorways that had been disturbed

by few sounds louder than my pensive stealings out and in, resounded now with the ringing speed of boyish footsteps, and the blythe din of boyish laughter. It is pleasant to look back upon that time, when from a childish hermit I became a boy!

There was for me after that era, no more solitary watching of the sports of others. The "haill water," ere long knew Charlie Graeme, as the adventurous leader of every troop of juvenile mischief makers, and I was by no means a slow or backward pupil. The complete revolution in my life which this produced, gave these vigorous enjoyments a still greater zest to me, albeit I sometimes felt the pleasure of compassionate benevolence towards these strong fellows, my seniors in years, whose unthinking mirth of mood was so much younger than mine. I liked the sports for their sake, and they gave me some

casual place in their regard for sake of the games in which I shared—we were different so far—but the lingerings of my recluse spirit, did by no means operate disadvantageously upon my physical activities. I had emerged into a new existence. I had entered the second stage of life.

Charlie was the son of my father's only brother. I had never seen, and scarcely ever heard of my uncle; but at his death, which took place a short time before his son's arrival at Mossgray, Charlie, with the very slender inheritance that remained to him, had been committed to my father's care, as his only near relative and guardian. To keep us together at Mossgray, was the cheapest and easiest way of getting rid of us, and accordingly we were dispatched together to the Academy of Fendie.

A somewhat famous school in our district,

which in its day has sent forth men into the world—men of stature and nobleness, some few, albeit it has filled up its quota with perhaps a greater than usual commodity of packmen ; but a school of high standing and character withal, to which the neighbouring gentry, and the smaller fry of " genteel families " in Fendie, could send their sons without derogation. We made the usual progress, as I fancy, in those routine affairs, which were called our studies. We learnt lessons with as much painstaking industry as we could summon up in the morning, and forgot them with the most praiseworthy ease at night. We were conscientious enough to play truant seldom—we had no more than our average of accidents. Charlie only twice fell into the water, and only once broke his arm. My nautical mischances had all some connection with the

mill-lead at the Dean, my favourite nook. On the whole we got through admirably. Never boys on the Border were blyther than we.

Young Fendie of the Mount was at an English boarding-school. Our sturdy home academy was not good enough for the young laird of that ilk. What storms of ridicule we poured upon him—he knapped English, he had a holy horror of torn breeks, he never climbed a tree in his life; and crowning shame of all, it was whispered among us in the utmost scorn and derision, that his dainty cambric handkerchief was perfumed like a lady's! We looked at the indefinite looking things in our own miscellaneous pockets, and echoed it with a storm of laughter. "He has scent on his napkin!" It was the very climax of derision: we could go no further.

Hew Murray of Murrayshaugh, was our warmest friend. We met sometimes, when out of door amusements were impracticable, in the vaulted room in Mossgray Tower, where lay in state, various remnants of ancestral mail, and which we called the armoury — to compare notes as to the changes which must have happened in the fortunes of Scotland, had we three chanced to fight at Falkirk with Wallace, or with James at Flodden. But whereas Hew Murray and I were chivalrously engrossed with considerations of what we could have done for Scotland, it always happened as I recollect, that Charlie rose in glorious anticipation of knighthoods and earldoms and broad lands to be won by his sword and by his bow. Innocent chevaliers errant were we, not without a weakness for beautiful disconsolate princesses, and imprisoned ladies to be set

free by our valour and fidelity, but the dazzling chances of war had greater fascination for Charlie. *Our* hero contented himself with freeing the lady, and reducing the castle—*his*, took possession of the conquered stronghold, and reigned in the stead of his enemy.

But our friends were not all of our own degree. A mile or two on the other side of Fendie lay a pretty house, which made up in its snug and comfortable proportions for its entire want of all the antiquities which clustered in hoary grace about Mossgray. Pertaining to it was a small farm, which sufficed to give its proprietor the much esteemed territorial designation. The name of the place was Greenshaw, its owner's Johnstone. People said, that he had driven a homely enough trade in former days; but never man on the northern side of Skiddaw, had seen any vestige of the pack on the broad

shoulders of Mr. Johnstone of Greenshaw. Besides, we do rather hold the "wanderer's" trade in good repute in our country, so the rumour did the comfortable man no harm.

His son Walter was one of our sworn brethren. Walter Johnstone surpassed us all in daring; but the greatest heat of boyish excitement could scarcely bring any additional glow to his cheek, or throw the slightest tremor into his hand. Walter could calculate his time to a moment; he was never late, he was never hurried. Prompt and bold, cool and acute, he was the regulator and time-keeper of our obstreperous band.

Then there was Edward Maxwell, the widow's son at the Watch-brae. He was the detrimental of our joyous parties. He always became weary at unseasonable times; he continually shirked his share of the work,

and evaded the perilous parts of our excursions; but he had good looks in his favour, and a winning, ingratiating, caressing manner, which overcame our reproaches. It always happened, too, that Maxwell's weakness brought him prominently forward among us. Speculations as to what he would do next, when he would fail in a fatigue, how he would glide out of a danger, with what new expedients he would excuse himself, kept our conversation full of him, and he felt the distinction, such as it was.

Other companions we had, greater and smaller as it chanced, for we were perfectly republican. Many kindly ties I have from that school-time with men of all classes, in all places and quarters of the earth: Australian settlers in the bush, merchants in London and Liverpool, distinguished men of literature, poor subalterns in India, humble

shopkeepers in Fendie, small farmer-lairds in my own county; these pleasant threads of old connection are spun out far and near. I like it—there is a kindly universality of brotherhood in this, that seems to me as much better, as it is wider and further reaching than any mere friendships of one especial class, isolated, and standing upon the bare platform of their position.

CHAPTER III.

The youth who daily further from the East
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended.

YES! it is in youth, properly so called, that the true age of poetry is.

The priesthood of nature, the mood that can hold communion with her in her every place and time—these come only when the boy's material age is past, and the childish dreams come back, mightier now and clearer, to clothe with their rare grace the expanding,

growing soul. Is it well that this radiance should by and bye fade into the light of common day? let us be content—the old man is of kin to the youth—perchance if the harsher meridian time did not intervene, it would scarcely be so.

But now the vision splendid travels with him everywhere. There is a glory about the hills and on the sky; there is music, all the more dear that it is inarticulate, in every running stream; there is, highest of all, a wonderful light of truth, and love, and nobleness, over all human things. Motives grand and sublime, labour generous and great, worthy of the marvellous position held by this mortal race. The whole universe vibrates to his ear, with heroic marches and noble chimes of music, to which his soul thrills, and his step keeps time. True indeed there are falsehood and selfishness and

change here, or whence these tales of sorrow, and this generous indignation that swells within him, against the wrong which is to be conquered; but these are not near him. In his own especial atmosphere there is perfect truth open at all points to the eye of day. His ideal covers and veils all meaner faults in the objects of his chivalrous affection; and he pities men who are smarting under neglect or inconsistency, or worldliness of friends, as those pity who feel their own blessedness made all the greater by the contrast.

Before I had reached this stage, my father had been for some time dead. Mr. Murray of Murrayshaugh, the father of our friend Hew, a surly old gentleman of very ancient family, and very meagre estate, was my guardian; and we boys, having fairly concluded our academy course, began to form

plans for our future life, not without much magniloquence of speech. Maxwell wavered long between the two grave professions of medicine and the Church. The latter was at first decidedly the favourite, for Johnstone, with malicious glee, drew so exquisite a picture of an adoring congregation, and ministering angels, in the form of ladies, old and young, that the gentle Edward was overpowered with modest delight. But the Widow Maxwell in her cottage, on the Watch-Brae, had no manner of influence in the Church, while she had the shadow of a promise from some patron of her husband's to procure for Edward a situation like his father's, that of an assistant army surgeon. So Maxwell's fate was determined. He was immediately to commence his studies as a medical student.

Johnstone at once and promptly, decided

for the law, in some one of its occult branches, I scarcely recollect which; but he had not the gift of utterance, and therefore was disqualified from entering the highest and most showy class of the profession.

Charlie's destination was less easily fixed. He was eager to grow rich—he aspired to be famous—he liked all the good things of this world so well, that he was undecided which to grasp at. He thought of India, and his eyes sparkled; but some indefinite feeling which was not home-love made him determine to remain in Scotland. I used to wonder at this; for Charlie with his frank fascination of manners, and his adventurous spirit, was the very man to travel—the very man, as I fancied in honest boyish admiration, to succeed brilliantly wherever he went; but he resolved to remain at home. Then he

thought of business—of becoming a great merchant—for youthful calculators have a happy knack of leaping over all the initiatory steps—but for that the capital was wanting. He had nothing—I not very much, and while I would joyfully have shared my utmost farthing with Charlie, that gruff old Murrayshaugh growled forth his veto—"There's enough tint with merchandize for one generation of ye!" so we relinquished that.

But the gift that Johnstone wanted, Charlie had in perfection. He was a natural orator; and the momentous decision was made at last. Charlie decided upon being a great lawyer—the most brilliant pleader in Scotland—perhaps Lord Advocate eventually—certainly a Member of Parliament—Member for Edinburgh! Charlie rose from his low carved chair by the fire as that

crowning glory burst upon him—the grandeur of it was overpowering—Member for Edinburgh!

Murrayshaugh was an impoverished and poor estate. Its possessor had been "wild" in his youth, and now resented and avenged upon his children the poverty himself had made. Lucy Murray grew up in forlorn and lonely seclusion, acquainted from her youth with many cares. Hew was designed for a civil appointment in India, where his father ordained, his industry should redeem the fortunes of the family. The harsh old man was a despot—there was no appeal against his arbitrary will.

But Murrayshaugh withal was a gentleman and a scholar; as anxious that his son should be fully and carefully fitted for the position he was to occupy as determined that in this way and no other, should Hew's life

be spent. So Hew also was to join our little band of students in Edinburgh, and to have the advantage of two or three sessions' training there, before he departed to his far-away labour. I could not part with them—Charlie and Hew especially were my sworn brethren; and after a long siege Murrayshaugh yielded to my very reasonable wish of accompanying them, and gave to Charlie and myself the necessary funds, commenting bitterly:

"Your father, Adam, gave me no charge of furnishing two lads for the college. An it be your silly pleasure to spend your means on your cousin, the way is to deny yourself, my man—not to think you are a pink of generosity when it costs you nothing. But take it—take it—I wish ye much gratitude. If ye get but the common share, ye will be well repaid."

"Never mind my father, Adam," said Lucy, as I emerged indignantly from the dreary library of Murrayshaugh, into the luxuriant garden, with its mossy terraces sloping to the river side. "Simon says true, his bark is worse than his bite—and I think, though he would not say it, that he is sad about you all going away, and only looks angry because he thinks shame."

"Are we to go, Adam?" said Charlie eagerly. He had come to Murrayshaugh with me, and had waited on the terrace with Hew and Lucy while I bearded the lion within.

"Yes," said I with some heat—for there is nothing that one resents so warmly in one's first youth, as any prophecy of ingratitude on the part of those whom we delight to honour. "Yes, we're to go. I

would like to know why old people continually think young ones fools."

I was nearly eighteen—I drew myself up.

"Perhaps because they are often, Adam," suggested Lucy gently.

I could not be angry at Lucy Murray. I was too full of boyish chivalry, having re-entered the age of imagination, to be anything but gentle and deferential to a girl.

"How you do speak," exclaimed my cousin, "you think us fools do you Lucy?—very well—you'll see that by and bye."

"When you read the honourable Member for Edinburgh's great speech," said Hew with his frank and pleasant laugh, "about —what will it be about, Charlie?"

"And I would like to know," continued Charlie angrily, "what we have done that

we should be thought so very foolish. We have only been at home all our lives, no doubt—people get so much more culture in Yorkshire !"

Lucy turned away.

"Never heed him, Lucy," said Hew, "he shows the cloven foot. It's all about poor Dick Fendie. Why, man, Charlie, to be jealous of him !"

Charlie was past eighteen. He had some time since thrown his handkerchief on Lucy Murray, and regularly engrossed her society ; by no means to her own satisfaction at first, but she had become accustomed to it. He had wounded her feelings now. He saw it himself, and was maliciously pleased. I saw it, as she wandered along the terrace towards the waterside, and could almost have thrown him over the wall, in spite of our brotherhood.

"What is the matter?" said I. "Quarrel with Hew or me as you like, Charlie, but what has Lucy done?"

Charlie twisted the graceful curl by the side of his cap, and swung round on his heel to follow Lucy without answering me. He was very handsome, and had a frank manliness in every look and gesture which disarmed one's reproofs. At present too, the conscious smile of power was on his face—he felt himself so sure of immediate forgiveness—so perfectly able to restore the smiles of Lucy Murray.

Hew and I stood watching him, as he went along the terrace after her. Our eyes met—we exclaimed in chorus. "He does not mean anything—Charlie would not hurt any one's feelings for the world."

"It was Lucy's own fault, talking so much of Dick Fendie," said Hew. "Mamma's

good boy has come home, Adam—have you seen him yet? And Lucy would defend him; but I suppose it's all over now. By the bye, Adam, how does it come about that you and I never quarrel with Lucy?"

"You and I—why, is she not your sister, Hew? and almost mine too—Charlie you know—Charlie is different."

Hew became thoughtful for a moment, and ended with a laugh. "Ay, that's because Mrs. Mense at Mossgray says they were made for each other. But I say, Adam, do Lilie Johnston and you battle at each other like these two?"

I blushed a tremulous blush—it was desecration to name this sacred name so lightly. The two things were altogether different—how or wherefore I did not stay to analyse—but my reverent boyish adoration, and Charlie's bold

demands upon the constant patience and sole regard of Lucy Murray, had no resemblance to each other. I shrank back—I would have had Lilias Johnstone distinguished by the reverent respect of all men, and to hear her name thus profanely conjoined with mine!

"Are you nearly ready, Hew?" I asked hastily, "and when are we to start?"

The starting time was decided on that night, and shortly after we set out, the whole rejoicing band of us, upon a bracing frosty morning late in October, on the top of the coach for Edinburgh. Maxwell managed to get up a few tears for his mother's especial benefit. I had nearly joined him myself, I recollect, when I saw her pale anxious face lifted up so tenderly to the high perch where we were crowded together. Never human face had worn that look for

me, and my heart warmed the more to the son of this sad mother, even while I almost envied him.

All the rest of us were motherless; but even the gruff "Good-bye, boys," of Murrayshaugh had some feeling in it this morning; and Lucy Murray's eyes were too heavy to be raised to us, as she stood by her father's side. Then there was a small white hand waving a handkerchief from within the high holly hedge of Greenshaw as we passed. It perhaps was not all for her brother. I appropriated, with trembling, some share of the farewell.

In a very short time we had settled down to our respective studies. It is comparatively unusual in Scotland to give youths the benefit of college education except for some special profession; so that, put the learned

faculties aside, and you leave but a small residuum to represent what forms the larger proportion of students in England. It is perhaps for this reason that we are more practical than our neighbours; that those niceties of profound classical learning which form the glory on the head of English universities—those painful researches into the nature of the Greek verb, and folio disputations on contested words, do scarcely exist among us. But that by the way. We were very frank, very unsophisticated, very innocent, we Fendie lads; and even, as I fancy, very little less so when we left than when we entered Edinburgh. It has its abundant temptations no doubt, as all other towns have, but so far as I myself saw, we came through them with tolerable safety. Faults of mind, and temper, and spirit, we

had many, but I think we, in a great degree, escaped that round of petty vices, the assumed manliness of which leads so many foolish lads astray.

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CHAPTER IV.

I walk as ere I walked forlorn
When all our path was fresh with dew
And all the bugle breezes blew
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

IN MEMORIAM.

I AM looking out from the deep window of my study, through the sharp air of a frosty, clear November night. There are lights gleaming in some cottage windows, so far down under the bare trees by the water-side, that you would think them glow-worms on the grass; and silvery mists are floating about the sky, and yonder lie some great distant

mountain clouds, with stars embayed in creeks and inlets at their feet, like lights of anchored ships.

The face of the beautiful night before me brings back another time. I fancy I am leaning again over the grey wall, which bounds the sloping road on yonder Calton, looking down with rapt and dreamy eyes upon that wonderful scene below. Hew Murray's arm is in mine; we have the visionary reverence of youth upon us, and when we speak, we speak low, and with few words. Yonder noble hill with its proud crest, and its visible darkness—yonder faint towers, far below, of storied Holyrood—that grand rugged line from the dim valley of the palace to the bluff front of the castle, with its graceful hovering crown of St. Giles lying so fitly upon the stately head of our royal city—the gleaming lights, halfway between

the dim sky, and the dimmer earth—the confused hum ascending up in softened dreamy murmurs. So near the life and din of a great city ; so near the wonderful gloom and silence of the everlasting hills. There is a jarring sound below. I start and open my eyes—and I am looking forth upon the placid water of Fendie, the low cottage lights below, and the steady stars above—an old man and alone !

After our third session together at college, Hew Murray went to his distant destination. Murrayshaugh himself came to Edinburgh to superintend his son's outfit, and to my very great grief, and the regret of the whole band of us, slightly mingled with envy, Hew set sail in a Leith smack—we had no steamers in those days—for London, from whence he was to proceed to Portsmouth, where his ship lay.

Hew was not of the cosmopolitan class; he was one of those—happily still existing, and I hope increasing in these days—whom the very name of home and country stirred like a trumpet. After the greatest motive of all—and I fear that in our youthful time *that* had but little comparative weight with us, as it had little place in the teachings of those who had the guiding of our unformed minds—the honour of his name and of his native land roused the warm spirit of my dear friend, Hew, as no other causes could. "For poor auld Scotland's sake"—in some degree we all shared the intense and loving loyalty which took this as its centre, but it was a ruling principle with Hew Murray; and he felt his banishment most painfully, though he submitted to the necessity like a man—for Hew had not any very brilliant hopes.

"There is little chance that I will be able

to return till I am old, Adam," he said to me, sadly, as we lingered on our favourite walk for the last time, looking down on the Old Town through the balmy dim spring night; "and if I should come home as rich as old Major Wardlaw of the Elms, what then? One would scarcely like to look forward to such an end of one's labours. His gouty chair, and his hot unwholesome room, and his solitude, and his grumbling, and his spiceries, and his inflammable temper. Man, Adam! to think that I must leave home, and part with Lucy and with all of you, and toil through my whole life where I shall never hear a Scotch tongue, for such an end as that!"

"You will hear many Scotch tongues in Bombay, Hew," said I, "and then you are sure to marry somebody's daughter, and come home immediately."

Hew's frank happy laugh rang into the dim air pleasantly; its sound always cheered me, but the remembrance that I might not hear it again for years fell upon me in blank pain. We made a great many hysterical attempts after that to be merry, but failed so woefully in every case, that we turned at last in silence round the brow of the hill, and looked out upon the sea: the noble Firth spreading its silvery lengths far away in the distance, with its dark islands and steady lights, and the broad line of its princely highway leading forth into the foreign world!

The cold, strange, alien world where home was not, nor friends. Hew Murray's hand grasped my arm for a moment with a convulsive pressure, and there were tears under our eyelids—tears which we were not ashamed to shed under cover of the gentle night.

The next day I watched a white sail gliding smoothly over the peaceful Firth, until I lost it on the horizon far away—and my dearest friend was gone.

For Charlie Graeme, brother-like as we were, was less closely joined to me than Hew. It is a vulgar notion that the warmest friendship requires a contrast of minds. Charlie and I had very distinct individualizations. Hew resembled me closely—I had almost said, that in matters of the mind and heart Hew Murray and I had all things common. In things physical there was the same connection between my cousin and myself; but heartily as I liked Charlie, there were many points on which I certainly knew that we could by no possibility agree; there were many matters of feeling and thought which I shrank from bringing under his keen glance—that glance which pierced

through my bashful sentimentalities with so little pity.

Maxwell got on delicately with those medical studies of his. He was a great favourite everywhere, his weakness, as usual, bringing him in for much more than his average share of consideration. Charlie and Walter toiled manfully at the dry initiatory necessities of their profession. They were "clever lads" of good parts and promise, both, and both too well endowed with stout common sense and the natural self-interest and ambition, to be, except in rare outbursts, loiterers or idlers. For my desultory self, I dabbled in all scientific crafts; was a metaphysician for one fit, and a chemist for another, and an antiquarian for a third; I dipped into Charlie's dreary quartos, and lingered at the threshold of the dissecting-room with Edward, and for my own hand got through heaps of

reading, systematic and unsystematic, not always drawn from the venerable shelves of the college library. It formed a pile of strange rubbish altogether, built up as it was with the crude philosophies peculiar to my years.

But sauntering along the Calton Hill now, alone, to dream over the Old Town, in its antique grace and beauty, made me sick at heart. Hew Murray was one of those rare friends whom one does not need to be continually talking to. A stranger who observed our few words might have taken us for very indifferent companions, but this was above all, the sign of our closest brotherhood. When Charlie was with us, we were talkative enough, for then a foreign element was introduced, but we were too much one when we were alone to have any such constraint upon us. And when from these

silent walks, we emerged into the bustle and light of the street below, and throwing off the charm, began to be as loud as our neighbours, we felt, both of us, that the chain of our regard was drawn closer by these communings. Never friend in this world did I appropriate and feel mine so entirely as Hew, and the dim hillside where my silence was unshared, where there was none to dream beside me as I dreamt, or to feel as I felt, became painful to my solitary eyes. I did not return to Edinburgh after Hew went away. It had lost its charm for me. I remained alone at Mossgray.

I was then a man. I had nearly reached my majority, and having perhaps exaggerated notions of what became my place and position in respect to the tenants and cottagers around me, I began to bestir myself to ascertain how I could do some work in

this brief district, allotted to me by Providence. I have always been inclined to the contemplative, but I am not idle, and with all the proud hopes and ambitions of youth to buoy me up, I laboured and deliberated "for the good of the people," with much enjoyment of the philanthropy.

Lucy Murray had grown into a young woman; graceful and grave, with lines of thought upon her forehead, printed perhaps too deeply for one so young. That slender ring upon her finger was Charlie's gift, and contains in its small enclosure one of those circlets of his sunny hair, which cling so lovingly about his temples and become them so well; for their engagement is a grave matter now, acknowledged and known. And yet I fancy them scarcely like each other yet, for Lucy has dwelt long with her own thoughts silently, and in solitude, and Charlie,

with his whole soul has embarked on the busy sea of life; but the contrast gives them singular grace when they are together, and Lucy is more than ever a sister to me.

The bright face at Greenshaw, which, with all its happy changes, has been the angel of my boyish dreams for years, is brighter now in the grace of early womanhood than ever before. I fancy her the inmate of some pure and holy atmosphere, the star of some loftier sky. I forget when I am near Greenshaw that there is sin in the world — I become heterodox in my very faith—for evil has no share in Lilias.

The name echoes in my ear with a ring of silvery music. The beautiful and pure of all ages shed their glory about her, and claim my devouter homage. The Rachel of yonder plains of Syria, the Mary, blessed among women, the Una, the Desdemona

of our own land. Their shadow is upon her in all places; the very neighbours, common-place as they are, speak low, I fancy, when they speak of "Lillie" and I forgive them the familiarity for the sake of the gracious name; for the stately flower in its royal purity, symbolizes my ideal well, and my garden at Mossgray grows white with snowy lilies, and I wander among them dreamily, in a mist of indefinite hopes, and fancied future gladnesses, too bright to tell.

The beautiful time! when every foundation stood fast, and all that was, was true and constant, and of kin to the pure heavens.

Yet Lilias was only the daughter of Mr. Johnstone of Greenshaw, who had little honour or standing beyond the bounds of Fendie. Murrayshaugh would have growled the utmost thunder of his anathema upon Lucy, had he known that in her sisterly

kindness she had accompanied me to the comfortable plebeian parlour where shone my star, and electrified good Mr. Johnstone into hopes of future friendships with those adjacent landed families, who had not hitherto condescended to notice him. But Lilias was shy of Lucy, and seemed, to my chagrin, indifferent to her visit; so I had to console myself with a transitory belief that Lilias felt proudly the injustice of those artificial barriers of society, and was sensible of wrong done to her native dignity by the false rule which made the Laird's daughter of Murrayshaugh a greater person than she, and by Lucy's quiet smile, and gentle word of consolation. "By and bye, Adam—we will be better friends, by and bye."

Yes—there was no landed family of them all, which could boast a line so long and so unbroken as that of Mossgray. The en-

cumbrances on the estate had gradually melted away during my frugal minority. I was able to maintain appropriately the position I had inherited. Only this one external matter of rank did Lilias want, and I had it, to lay it at her feet—the name itself acquired new honour and dignity, when my heart beat to anticipate the advent of a new lady of Mossgray, who should eclipse all who went before.

I greatly affected Mr. Johnstone's company then. He was a shrewd man, if not a refined one; and albeit he did not possess that fearful command of words which strikes one with utter panic when one comes to the beginning of a speech of his fellow carftsman the "Wanderer" of Wordsworth, he yet could manage to keep up a conversation tolerably well, by help of an occasional monosyllable from the other interlocutor—

we became great friends. He gave me counsel about the management of my lands; he told me that Matthew Irving of Friarsford, whose tack was nearly out, had been holding his farm for some years past, nearly rent free, so greatly had the land increased in value, since his father got the lease. He talked to me of foreign wars and home politics—I listened in happy unconsciousness, feeling only that I was conciliating the goodwill of the father of Lilias, and advancing slowly to my aim.

Mr. Johnstone was too shrewd a man not to perceive by and bye, what brought me so often, bashful and absorbed, into that corner of his parlour. The good man evidently believed at first that I sought the benefit and enlightenment of his conversation; but through a flood of random answers, and unhappy lack of comprehension on my

part, of arguments which I never heard, his eyes were opened. He was by no means displeased, I fancied. I was "Mossgray" already, my income was good, my prospects better. I was altogether eligible for a son-in-law.

And by and bye, I thought I discovered that the Fendie young ladies, who bore Lilias company sometimes, looked at her with wicked secret laughs and whisperings when I entered the room. Could Lilias *guess* herself? Alas, I could not tell! I was too self-conscious to be at ease with her, and she had always been shy to me.

And matters remained in this uncertain state for a considerable time. I became of age. Murrayshaugh gruffly resigned, as he had gruffly undertaken, the guardianship of myself and my possessions. His house grew more and more desolate as I fancied,

and Lucy paler and more thoughtful every day. She was quite alone, and we used to walk together sometimes on the old terrace in silent sympathy, thinking of Hew. He had reached his destination safely, and entered with cheerfulness (as he told us) into the duties of his office; but the loss of him cast a sad shadow over the house of his fathers. Perhaps it might be only that—perhaps there was something more; but a sadder decay seemed to be gathering over it, every time I visited Murrayshaugh.

CHAPTER V.

I leaned my back unto an aik,
I thought it was a trusty tree;
But first it bowed, and syne it brake,
And sae did my true love to me.

OLD SONG.

Our three students, Charlie, Walter, and Edward at length completed their studies, and entered upon the duties of their respective professions. Charlie got his first brief from an old friend of the family, and there actually was a report of his speech on the case, by no means an important one, but greatly interesting and very momentous to us, in

one of the Edinburgh papers. It was something about a quarry I think, though what about it, I cannot very well remember. I hurried up to Murrayshaugh with the paper. It was a bright day of early summer, and Charlie himself was to be with us in a week; a visit to which we had long looked forward, and of which Lucy and I, had more than once spoken.

I found Lucy in her own little parlour, at the low window which opened to the terrace. The willows were sweeping their long branches over the sighing water, and in spite of the May sunshine over all, and the universal joy without, there was a look of sadness here. I involuntarily restrained my quick step as I reached the window, and Lucy looked up from her habitual work, with her usual kindly and gentle smile.

"Look here, Lucy! I have brought you

news," said I, "news worth seeing. Come, don't read them in a dull room this May-day. Come out into the sunshine and read them here."

Lucy rose eagerly.

"What is it? is it about Hew, Adam, or—" She paused, a wavering painful colour came upon her cheek, and her fingers played nervously with the work she had laid down.

"Lucy, you do not think I could bring you anything but good news to-day. Come out and read Charlie's first speech. His pleadings on his first brief, you know—you heard all about that."

I fancied I saw a slight shiver of her frame. She had not heard it! but in a moment after Lucy stept out upon the terrace and took the paper and read. I thought her figure seemed taller and more distinct

against the shadowy background of willows, as she stood there before me with the paper in her hand. There was something in it of firm pride and endurance which struck me as new—some greater emotion than I had ever known.

"Did Charlie send you this, Adam," she asked as she gave it back to me.

"Yes, Lucy," said I, humbly, feeling myself guilty of giving her great pain when I had expected to bring her pleasure; "it came last night."

There was a slight, almost imperceptible shiver again, and a wandering of the fingers towards each other, as though they would fain be clasped together in the instinctive gesture of grief.

"Wait for me a moment, Adam," said Lucy; "I have something to say to you."

I waited upon the terrace while she went in. What could this portend? I believed, and so did all the countryside, that their marriage was delayed only until Charlie had a prospect of success in his profession. He had told me so himself; it was an understood thing; yet Lucy had not been told of his first brief.

She joined me almost immediately, having only gone in, as it appeared, to throw the light plaid she usually wore, over her shoulders and head, and I waited in anxious silence for her first words.

We had reached the waterside, and paused there together, the long willow-boughs sweeping over us sadly, before she spoke:

"Adam," she said then, "have you had any conversation with my father lately? Has he ever spoken to you about—about his own affairs?"

"No, Lucy," said I.

"Adam, I may speak to you," said Lucy. "There is some new calamity hanging over us. I have seen my father receive letters of late—letters that I could perceive were from lawyers—which have brought to his face that white look of despair which you never saw. I mentioned Walter Johnstone's name to him once—when you told us he had gone into partnership with some one in Edinburgh—because he was Hew's companion, and—and yours—and my father broke out into a curse upon him, immediately adding, however: 'Not him—why should *I* swear at a packman's son? but my own miserable fortune, that am doomed to be tortured to death by these hired hounds of lawyers!' I dared ask nothing then, but I have been ready to catch at every word since; and my father has vaguely intimated to me some

intention that we should go to France—at least," said Lucy, hastily, with an indignant blush burning on her face, and a painful heaving of her breast, "that he would go—and, of course, I will not leave him."

"But the cause, Lucy?" said I. "He can have no cause."

"Alas, Adam, I cannot tell!" said Lucy, sadly, "for he never has taken me into his confidence; but I think it must be some responsibility—some—Adam, I do not need to hesitate—you know well that we have always been poor."

I did not know how to answer her; I leaned upon the old mossy wall by Lucy's side, eager to speak of herself—of Charlie, and yet afraid.

"Is there anything that I can do?" I said. "You can trust me, Lucy; is there anything that I can do?"

"No, no, Adam! I do not mean that; no one must interfere with my father or his purposes, you know; but I only desired to tell you that you might understand as much as I do of why we went, if we do go away, and—I only wished to tell you, Adam."

Lucy turned her head away; one or two tears, so large that one could see by what bitter force they had been restrained, fell softly on the moss of the wall, but she thought I did not see them.

"Lucy, Lucy, this must not be!" said I; "tell me what I can do; I will venture anything rather than that this should come upon us! If Hew were only here—if you would but plead for me, Lucy, that your father may remember that what I have is yours—yours with my whole heart."

I saw her shake and tremble in the strong effort to restrain herself, but it would not do.

She pressed her hand across her eyes, and again the tears fell singly upon the moss—a few large bitter tears, as if they had been gathered long—an essence of intense pain too powerful to spend itself in much weeping —deliberate drops wrung from her very heart.

"I thank you, Adam," she said at last, "and yet I do not need to say, I thank you —you know that—but this cannot be; you must do nothing; none of us can do anything except submit. It was only a selfish desire to pain you, I am afraid, which made me tell you this; for it will indeed be very hard to leave Murrayshaugh!"

I could say nothing in return. Alas! there are harder trials than even bidding farewell to one's home. All was not well in this beautiful world; there were other things among us than those I had dreamed of, and

my heart sickened as I tried to reassure myself.

By and bye, Lucy turned along a quiet sheltered way, close by the waterside, and I went with her—perhaps I should have left her there, but I followed in spite of myself. We began to speak of Hew.

"Do you think we shall ever meet all together again, Adam?" said Lucy.

"Surely—I hope so," said I, hastily. "We are all young, Lucy; we may be changed externally perhaps, but that will be all."

"If we are ever together again, we shall be changed in every way, Adam."

"Nay, nay, Lucy," said I, "I cannot let you take up that gloomy notion. Why should we change? We know each other far too well to alter our old likings. We will

be the same, Lucy, when we are grey-headed."

"Will *you*, Adam?—will all of us?—or are we indeed what we think we are?—are we not clothing ourselves and others with some ideal of our own, which hides the natural spirit from us?"

"Lucy!"

"Suppose one had done that," said Lucy, hurriedly, turning her head away, and speaking more as I thought to herself than to me. "Suppose one had clothed another in an ideal so beautiful, so noble, that one almost trembled at one's own wondrous gladness beholding it; and suppose that suddenly a blast came, and rent the glorious tissue here and there, and revealed a hidden thing of clay below; and one came to know that this noble spirit had never *been* at all, save in the

fancy that created it. I dreamt of such a thing the other night; and dreams come true sometimes. Adam, we all change—not one, but all of us."

I could not speak then, nor did I try to answer her. What could I say? it was the first check put upon my joyous confidence in all whom I called friends.

"Has your father told Hew, Lucy, that he thinks of leaving Murrayshaugh?" I inquired at last, eager to change the subject.

"I think not. I hope it is only *possible*, Adam; I know nothing more than that; my father does not trust me; but we must know soon."

I left Murrayshaugh sadly that day. When I had nearly reached Mossgray, I met Lilias with some of her companions, driving her father's little four-wheeled equipage. They paused a moment to receive my eager bashful

salutations, and then drove on. The sunshine of that young face dispersed the cloud of doubt and unhappiness that hung about me; for anything false, anything sad could not come near Lilias—

> "I trow that countenance cannot lie
> Whose thoughts are legible in the eie,"

I said to myself joyously as I went on. I repented me of my suspicions of Charlie. Lucy must be mistaken. His conduct could be explained. The bright mist fell again over the world, and I forgot my fears and anxieties; they all fled before the smile of Lilias.

I did not see Lucy Murray again before Charlie himself arrived. He reached Mossgray on the afternoon of another brilliant May-day. He was very full of his prospects, and considerably elated with his successful

beginning. He even told me the particulars of this first case, I recollect, in natural excitement and exultation, and very humdrum as they were, they interested me too, for his sake.

He had been nearly an hour in the house. Mrs. Mense, the housekeeper, was preparing a magnificent dinner in honour of Mr. Charlie, the great advocate; and there he sat, lounging half out of the open window, talking himself out of breath. I am nervous when I have any cause of anxiety. I began to change my position, to walk about the room, to take up and throw down everything within my reach. Charlie made no sign—he lounged and talked and laughed; he discussed the things which he *would* do, and which I *should*. I could bear it no longer.

"Charlie," said I, "you intend to go to

Murrayshaugh I suppose before dinner. You should set out at once, and make haste, for Mrs. Mense will not forgive you if you spoil her trout to-day."

"Trout!" said Charlie, "are we to have trout to-day? Mrs. Mense is a sensible woman, Adam. I would not endanger Fendie trout for the world."

"You are illogical, Charlie," said I, "you forget that the governing clause in my sentence concerned Murrayshaugh, and not the fish."

"Pooh—Murrayshaugh's a bore," said Charlie hastily. "Do you angle yet, Adam, yourself? you lucky fellow, who have nothing to do, and can choose your own solacements!"

"But, Charlie," said I anxiously; "of course you intend to go some time this

evening. I will undertake to make your peace with Nancy. There now, away with you, like a good fellow."

"It's ill talking between a fou man and a fasting," said Charlie with a forced laugh. "Come, Adam, let's have dinner first—you forget my journey."

He went off to his own room immediately, and I could say no more. I trembled for him. I feared to see the glorious tissue rent, as Lucy Murray said, and some other alien spirit appear below, which was not my friend and brother—which was not the true and generous Charlie Graeme.

We dined alone, and there was a certain constraint upon our conversation. Charlie, it is true, still spoke much, but he seemed as I fancied to speak against time. How he lingered at table—how he spun out his stories, and deliberated over every little

change, and laboured to fasten arguments upon me, as though endeavouring to shut my eyes to the progress of those slowly darkening hours. I bore it as long as I could, and I bore it in intense pain—I had never known so great a trial.

"Charlie," said I at last. "How we waste our time here. Come, I will walk up with you to Murrayshaugh."

Charlie muttered something between his teeth. I only heard "Murrayshaugh," but there was a syllable before which I blushed to guess at. "Ah, don't weary me out," he said aloud. "You don't think I am made of cast-iron like your Herculean rustics. It's too late now, Adam."

I turned round and looked at him earnestly. He started to his feet with the quick anger of one who knows himself in the wrong.

"Well, what do you mean, Adam?"

"What do I mean, Charlie? It is I who should ask that question. *You* mean something by this—what is it?"

"By what?—come, come, Adam, this won't do. Don't assume the head of the family, I beg. I can manage my own affairs without any interference from you."

I thought of Lucy Murray standing alone upon yon mossy terrace, without one in the world who could know, or could lighten her grief, aware that he was here, and looking for his coming in vain, and in the warmth of my youthful feelings I was overcome.

"Charlie," said I, "you will grieve Lucy sadly, if you do not go till to-morrow. Lucy is alone."

"Well, I will save her the infliction," said Charlie with affected boldness. "It is well I

had arranged it so before. I return to Edinburgh to-morrow."

"Do you want to break her heart," I exclaimed.

"I am not answerable to any one for what I intend to do," said Charlie sullenly.

"Yes, Charlie," said I, "you *are* answerable—to one higher than we—to Hew had he been here—even to me. What is this, Charlie? You do not mean it—it is some passing quarrel which a few words will set right."

"So!" said Charlie with a sneer. "Miss Lucy has been complaining to you!"

My mood changed in a moment; from the utmost sorrow it became the most passionate anger. I had been labouring to prevent this inevitable rupture—now I was only eager that it should be completed.

"No," I exclaimed, "you have never known Lucy Murray. I who have been with you so long, only begin to know you now. You—you will never know Lucy—it is well you feel yourself unworthy of her—it is fit indeed that her true heart should not be wasted upon you."

My own heart ached as I turned away from him. I had lost my friend. I began to grope in a world of shadows where truth was not; and not even the smile of Lilias could have woven again those fair ideal garments about Charlie Graeme.

We were mutually silent and sullen after that. Charlie was the first to speak.

"Adam," he said, "I don't want to quarrel with you, but I will answer to no man for my conduct; my motives and purposes are my own—and there has been quite enough of this. Walter Johnstone

came out with me from Edinburgh to-day. Will you go over with me to Greenshaw to see him ?"

I shrank from him—that he, unveiled and disenchanted as he was, should breathe the air which Lilias made holy—that her smile should fall upon *him !* I could hardly restrain myself, but for my old affection's sake, and for Lucy's sake, I did.

" I will follow you," I answered, " at present I cannot go."

He left the room, and, in a few minutes, the house, and I saw him go down the wa ter whistling a merry tune, and pausing now and then, to look round upon those peaceful home scenes, which his presence now desecrated to me. Murrayshaugh was in the opposite direction. I hurried along towards it under the trees, with an instinctive desire to see Lucy, and, unseen myself, to carry at

least one sympathethic heart to her vicinity. It was a superstition of its kind. I had no thought of that—it was an instinct with me.

And there she certainly was upon the terrace, with her soft light plaid about her head, and her figure gliding strangely through shadows of the trees, and of the quaint, fantastic gables of the house, which the light of a young moon threw faintly on the ground at her feet. I saw her threading the maze of these, as she moved like a spirit upon the mossy garden path, and I began to fancy in the bitterness of my heart that it was thus with us all; that those shadowy unreal forms of ours, were but wandering blindly through a shadowy world of pains and sorrows, which if it were not all false, was yet involved in a miserable twilight, where one knew not what was false and what was true.

The old decaying house, with its marks of gradual downfal and lingering sorrowful pride, and the one faint light in the window of the library where sat its aged possessor, struggling with a young man's strength of haughty resistance against the slow ruin that was gliding upon him like a thundercloud. The low cadence of those rustling willows, wooing the answering murmur of the water —the silence of the waning evening, made sadder and more spirit-like by the wan young moon which gave to its dimness a spectral light and shadow—and Lucy Murray in her early youth, with not one heart that could or dared stand by her in her need, wandering among those shades, with the dark sky above, in the dim world, alone! I hurried away again. I could not look upon her.

CHAPTER VI.

Alas!
I do confess I thought all hearts were true,
As I did see the whole bright world—how fair!
For linked in happy fancies were the twain—
This beautiful—that pure—
And like the mountains of this noble land
Did Love and Faith and Honour steadfastly
Lift their high heads to the bright sun that crowned them,
As I thought, in my sight.
I do confess me—if it was a sin
Behold these tears—for bitterly awaking,
I found I had but dreamed.

THE parlour of Greenshaw was exceedingly bright when I entered it that night—

brighter in reality for they were rejoicing over Walter's return—and brighter still in contrast with the scene I had left.

"Here he is at last," cried Walter Johnstone starting up to shake hands with me as I entered. "Why, have you been seeing ghosts, Adam? One would think that we were the rustics and he the townsman, Charlie."

"You were always a contemplative man, Mossgray," said Edward Maxwell greeting me warmly; "but take care—if you do not tremble for the consequences of a prescription from me, I do, I can tell you."

Edward's manner was more manly than usual. In my yearning for something to make up for the fatal loss I had sustained, I caught at this eagerly. Perhaps I had neglected him hitherto. I resolved to do so no longer.

I tried to seat myself so as to shut out Charlie from the light of that countenance, which made me forget even *his* unworthiness. I grudged him the slightest word from Lilias—I fancied how the pure soul within her would withdraw itself in lofty indignation, did she know him as I did.

"Mossgray," said Walter, "have you any message for your friend Hew Murray? Maxwell is going to follow his example, do you know."

"How?" I asked.

"Oh, that famous appointment we have heard so much of has come at last," said Edward. "The —— regiment are to have the benefit of my learned services, and they are lying at some heathenish place not far from Hew's head-quarters. The name I have learned to write after a day's practice—but the pronunciation—come now, Walter, be

merciful—don't make me desperate by forcing these dislocated syllables over my lips—at least not in Miss Johnstone's presence."

"Oh, never mind Miss Johnstone—Lilie is not such an epicure in sounds," said Walter. "Come along Mixy. After all, man, I believe you don't know the true secret so well as I do. A professed lady's man should never be ladylike himself. What do you say, Mossgray? Do you hear me, Charlie—am I not right?"

Mixy was our familiar contraction of Edward's respectable surname—we were rather proud of our ingenuity in manufacturing a diminutive which suited name and profession alike so well; and he took it with wonderful good humour. To-night, however, he seemed displeased a little. I did not wonder; for who could endure to be exposed to ridicule in the presence of Lilias?

"You're right in the abstract, Wat," answered Charlie with perfect coolness: "but wrong in this particular instance. To think of giving counsel to Mixy in such matters—why, Mixy's irresistible!"

Edward coloured and laughed.

"There, now, Charlie, that will do. Don't believe them I beg, Miss Johnstone; it's mere malice I assure you."

"Take care, Lilie," said Walter, "he wants to put you off your guard. Ask Mossgray, if you don't believe me."

I coloured more deeply than Edward—this was carrying the joke too far—that Lilias, in her unapproachable purity and loftiness, should be so addressed was a kind of sacrilege. I started in jealous eagerness to save her name from the careless *badinage* which was profanity to me.

"All this has nothing to do with Hew

Murray," I said hastily, and I felt my cheek burn as I turned away from Charlie. "Are you to be in Bombay, Edward?—are you to be near Hew?"

"Yes, Bombay is my first destination," said Edward. "I shall seek him out of course—and I suppose I must go in a month or too, so you may prepare your remembrances, Adam."

"And will you be long away, Mr. Maxwell?" said Lilias softly.

I bent forward at the sound of her voice. I always did—but this night, for the first time, I felt myself grow hot and angry when I saw Edward's head also incline towards the speaker, and his face brighten to answer her.

"Many years, I fear, Miss Johnstone—many sad years—if I ever do see Fendie again."

I thought the low fall of his voice was affectation. Then I repented me—I was exquisitely uncomfortable; doing them all injustice except herself and Charlie — my pure and beautiful star whom no imperfection could cast a shadow on, and the untrue, detected man whom I had called my friend. To these, in their extremes of honour and humiliation, I could not fail to do perfect justice.

"Come, don't be sentimental," said Johnstone. "You'll come home Mixy—not the least fear of you—and build a thing with pagodas, and a verandah, and call it by an outlandish name, and end your history like a fairy tale. Hew, poor fellow—I am afraid *his* chance of seeing Fendie again is worse than yours."

"How is that?" I exclaimed. "Has any-

thing happened, Walter? Have you heard of anything adverse to the Murrays?"

"The poor old man has ruined himself," said Walter. "I am afraid he must lose everything—but to be sure that is not a thing to be discussed so publicly."

I turned round and looked Charlie Graeme in the face. He lifted his coward eyes to me for a moment in quick self consciousness, but they fell before mine. This then was the pitiful reason—I turned indignantly away. I could scarcely bear to look at him again.

We all rose to leave Greenshaw together. Walter accompanied us to Fendie. I put my arm through his hurriedly, and kept him behind, while Charlie and Edward went on before us. I was eager to question him about Murrayshaugh, and eager to escape from the society of my cousin.

"If it is no breach of confidence, Walter," I said, "I would be glad if you could tell me, what this is, that seems to threaten Murrayshaugh?"

"It is no breach of confidence now," said Johnstone, "for I fear it must very soon be public enough. Murrayshaugh undertook a heavy responsibility long ago for some old friend, Adam; and many years since this friend died, and the whole burden of the debt fell upon Mr. Murray, so that only the unusual forbearance of the creditor kept him from being ruined. But now the original creditor who knew the circumstances, is also dead, and his heir will have no mercy, so that the old man I fear, must give up everything. I am afraid Adam, they will think of me very unfavourably—but that my partner happened before I joined him, to be their creditor's agent, is of course no

fault of mine. It annoys me though, often; I wish you would just mention that, when you write to Hew—not that any sensible person would blame me of course—but only there's an uncomfortable feeling."

"Hew will understand," said I, "but of course I will do what you ask me, Walter; and Murrayshaugh will lose all—did you say all?—and can nothing be done to help him?"

"Nothing but paying the money," said the man of business by my side, "and it's a very heavy sum, what with costs and interest, and other such devourers of impoverished means—and besides, Murrayshaugh is too proud to receive a favour, Adam, even from you. He would rather lose everything, you know. I confess, harsh and repulsive as he has always been, there will be something wanting in the countryside if that

proud old man does not decay peacefully here, like any other ruined tower—but he would take assistance as an insult—you know he would."

I did know it, and went on sadly, thinking of the desolate household, and scarcely remembering my companion's presence.

"And by the bye, Mossgray," said Walter abruptly, "you might mention that—about my partner being this man's agent—to Miss Murray; not that she will care of course—but just—one does not like to be unjustly blamed."

"Lucy does not know," said I, "but I will tell her, Walter, since you wish it. Poor Lucy!—I mean," I added, as I saw his keen eye shoot from me to Charlie, who walked before us, with an intelligent glance, "I mean it will be so great a trial to her to leave Murrayshaugh."

Johnstone did not speak. I felt that this was not known to me only, and I remembered bitterly then, that on *her* the scorn would lie, the stigma of being slighted and deserted; and that scarcely either man or woman would think the worse of him—him the faithless coward who had thus failed in need.

I scarcely recollect how Charlie and I managed our brief intercourse after that, but it was a very great relief to me when he departed next day. For the first time since we knew each other, Charlie went into Fendie to take his departure alone, with no one to bid him farewell. I believe he felt in some degree the emphasis of the broken custom. I almost believe he would have been glad then to undo what he had done—but the die was cast—it was too late.

A few days after, I went to Murrayshaugh, anxious if I could manage it indirectly, to see Lucy, and yet afraid to meet her. It was a chill day for summer, with a clouded sky and a loud boisterous breeze tossing the long willow boughs into a sort of fantastic unearthly mirth, which moved me, much as the unseemly merry-making of a mourner might have done. Lucy was sitting in a favourite corner of hers, at the end of the terrace, reading—at least she had a book in her hand. As I approached the stile, and little bridge, over the Murrayshaugh burn, under cover of the eldritch willow branches, she perceived me, and observing that I hesitated to enter, beckoned me to her. I obeyed at once.

I do not think she was paler that day than she had always been, but there was a

grave composure about her face, which made her seem so. Whatever struggle there had been it was over—and I remember a consciousness of something clear and chill about her, such as one feels in the air after a storm—an atmosphere in which everything stands out in bold relief, disclosing all its points and angles against the distinct far distant sky. Yet Lucy was no less benign—no less gentle than she had always been.

"I wanted to see you, Adam," she said. "I will write to Hew, to-day—have you anything to say to him?"

"No," said I, stammering and hesitating, for I felt painfully the great event, the era in our lives which had become known to me since I saw her last. "No, Lucy—except what Hew does not need to be told I hope—that I constantly think of him as of my

most dear friend, and that scarcely anything in the world would delight me so much as to see him again."

"I will tell him," said Lucy, "one likes to hear such things sometimes, Adam, even when one is in no doubt of them—and I will tell him any other pleasant thing you know, to make amends for the sad news I must send him—for I am afraid that is certain now, Adam, which I said before was only possible—we must leave Murrayshaugh."

"Is there no way of averting this calamity?" I exclaimed.

"You know my father, Adam," said Lucy, "he does not trust me as he might do; but I have almost been acting as a spy these few days, and there is no hope I see; for one of the few trials that can really shake his iron nature is this of leaving home, and if there

was any hope of averting it, he would try all means before he yielded."

"Lucy," said I, "help me to present my petition to your father—beg him to remember how greatly I am indebted to you all, and entreat him to consider me thus far as his son. If what I have will do, why should he not take it, Lucy? I am a young man—I am ashamed of my own indolence—I will go and seek my fortune like Hew, and will be far happier so than as I am. Lucy—"

"Hush, Adam," said Lucy, stopping me, as I eagerly pleaded with her, "you must not think of this. I cannot suffer you to say another word, and you know my father with his harsh pride would not be indebted even to his own son for such assistance. No, no, he will bear his own burden alone, and so must I—that it is not easy or light is a

lesser matter—we must bear our own lot; but Adam, I am glad you have said this—I am glad," said Lucy slowly, a gush of sudden tears coming to her eyes, which seemed to flow back again, and did not fall. "I am glad you would have *done* it, Adam. I will mind it when I am heavy again, and sinking—and I will tell Hew."

"But, Lucy, listen to me," I exclaimed. "May I not speak to Murrayshaugh? may I not ask your father?"

"Not unless you wish to make him desperate, Adam. Nay, do not look impatient. To satisfy you, I will mention it to him myself, and even urge it if I can. I know what the issue will be, but I will do you this justice, Adam—are you content?"

I was compelled to be so. I hardly could have dared myself, under any circumstances,

to offer pecuniary assistance to Murrayshaugh.

We parted very soon. Lucy did not make the slightest allusion to Charlie—there was not even a hint or inference which I could fancy pointed to him. She was very composed—so much so, as to make it evident to me who knew her well, that there had indeed been some grievous troubling of those quiet waters, before so dead a stillness fell upon them—but no one who knew her or observed her less, could have seen any trace of a crisis past, or a great struggle completed in the grave composure of her manner. Whatever memorials of the storm there might be within, there were none without.

I thought when I left her, of an ascending road leading westward from Fendie, which,

when you look along its line at night seems to go off so abrupt and chill into the clear cold sky beyond, that its solitary wayfarers mysteriously disappear there, into the luminous blank of heaven, and you watch them with a feeling of desolate loneliness, as they glide in silence away. I thought of Lucy on that road alone—since then, whenever I recall her memory, I have fancied I saw her slight figure there, travelling away steadily into the cold horizon, unwavering and alone.

CHAPTER VII.

He speired at her mother, he speired at her father,
He speired at a' her kin,
But he speiredna the bonnie lass hersel,
Nor did her favour win.

KATHERINE JANFARIE.

WALTER JOHNSTONE remained nearly a month at Fendie. During this time he made two or three visits to Edinburgh, but as a new beginner, he was not yet very much cumbered with business. He was the brother of Lilias—I became interested in all his pursuits, and indulgent of all his foibles. We were seldom separate; for if

I was abroad with Walter almost all the day, I sat in my especial corner in the Greenshaw parlour all the evening, and that privilege was cheaply purchased by any fatigue or inconvenience. I fancied I began to make some silent gradual progress. I fancied Lilias was scarcely so shy as she used to be in my presence, and I myself began to be a little more rational in my adoration. To the devout homage of the age of chivalry, I endeavoured to add a little of that more ordinary and slighter thing, which is called "paying attention." I adopted as much of it as the shyness of my deeper feeling would permit, and almost envied, while I was offended by, the fluent ease of Maxwell, who like myself was a frequent visitor at Greenshaw, but who, unlike me, could be quite at ease with Lilias, and ventured to treat her like

any ordinary girl. Ordinary girl! what do I say? there was no such being in existence to me. Unapproachable, above all others, was my own queen and lady, but the light of her presence shed a reflection upon *them*. I owed them all a reverence for her sake.

Maxwell was preparing to go away, he said. I wished him in India with all my heart, and wondered audibly why he delayed so long. Not that I was, what is vulgarly called jealous; but while I did feel envious of any sharer in my sunshine, I grudged that it should fall on one to whom it was merely common light. I was angry because he did "pay attention" to Lilias, and I thought meanly of him because, admitted as he was to her society, he could be content with "paying attention." Altogether his presence irritated me. I heartily wished him away.

Walter Johnstone was a pleasant companion—even forgetting, had that been possible, whose brother he was: we became great friends. He was too acute not to percieve how matters stood, and I fancied he had no desire to discourage me. We were out together on the last day of his stay at Greenshaw: he had become very confidential, he told me his circumstances with his partner, his anticipated income, his intention of taking a house in York Place; and finally, the last and greatest of all, his prospect of getting a mistress to the house. I listened with the greatest interest, and congratulated with the utmost warmth—it was impossible for any brother to have been more sympathetic than I—and then, with sudden boldness, I poured out into his ear, my own great secret. When the first barrier was removed, the flood poured forth too

strongly for any diffidence to check it. I spoke very fervently, as I felt. I fancy it must have been with some sort of natural eloquence too, for Walter's hand trembled when he grasped mine, and promised me his help.

Before I recollected myself, while we were still in a kind of cloud of excited earnestness, I found myself in Mr. Johnstone's presence; and then, as there is no boldness like the nervous boldness of your shy man when he reaches the needful heat, I made speedy conquest of him. Then I was ushered into the well-known parlour, with its forenoon look of quietness and new arrangement, to wait for Lilias.

The slow sunbeams stealing through the blinds, the chairs standing formally in their places, the closed piano, the books replaced in their shelves, the work-table withdrawn

in its corner; how vividly I remember all these homely usual things, and how solemn they made my waiting. She came at last—and then I remember in a mist how the full tide of my eloquence poured forth again, and how I was successful. Yes, successful! I left Greenshaw triumphantly, the proud possessor of the plighted troth of Lilias.

I returned home in happy unconsciousness of how or where I went. On the way I met Maxwell, I recollect, and was too much elevated above all ordinary things to do more than speak the briefest words of recognition to him, overflowing though I was with the universal benevolence of a light heart; and yet, withal, I remember how some faint ghost of consciousness haunted me that I was not happy enough—that Lilias's consent was sadly mechanical, that it

lacked—but no! I was not so profane as that; I could see nothing lacking in Lilias.

I was not to see her again that night—she was engaged at some Fendie party—and so I wandered the evening out by the waterside, flying from less ethereal society. I had half an idea of going to tell Lucy, but like a miser, I chose to exult over my secret treasure a little longer before I shared the joy of it with any one.

And I remember well what wondrous dreams glided before my eyes, in bright processions, peopling yonder far-away glades and noble trees, with groups of fairy figures, more beautiful than ever dreamer saw before. I saw her pass over the threshold of Moss-gray with her bridal grace upon her. I saw her dwell there in her gracious, growing womanhood, drawing all pleasant things

towards her as flowers turn to the sun; and though my heart did indeed beat high with proud gladness, when I remembered that it was *my* name she shed so sweet a lustre on, and that it was *I* who stood beside her in all the shifting groups of my fancy—even that stood aside, as selfish rejoicings must always do, in presence of the supreme joy I had in herself. That she was—that in our dim world, there shone this one especial star, as true, as pure, as gracious as the heavens—whose constant outcoming must be beneficence and love; whose constant meed—too poor a one for her lofty deservings—must be blessings and honour. I could not fathom the depths of my own happiness—I could but float upon its sunny stream.

The next morning rose brightly in all the brilliant joy of June, and as early as I could venture, I set out for Greenshaw. The

slight morning traffic of those quiet Fendie streets—the cottage wives, upon its outskirts, going about their cheerful household labour —the domestic sounds that came pleasantly from the wayside houses—I remember them with the sunshine of my own joy over all, giving harmony and finest keeping to the homely picture. At last I approached the well-known holly hedge. A woman stood at the gate looking down the lane; the parlour-blinds were closed; there was a look of excitement about the house, as if something unusual had happened. I hurried on, noticing *that* in my haste, but too pleasantly expectant to think of it.

The woman at the door was Mr. Johnstone's factotum—a sensible, matronly person, who exercised the more laborious duties of housekeeper, for which Lilias was too inexperienced and young.

"Good morning, Margaret," I said, as I came up, and was about to pass in.

Margaret stretched out her hand to stop me.

"Oh, Mossgray!"

There was evident distress and trouble on her face. A slight tremor of alarm came over me.

"Has anything happened?" I said. "What is the matter, Margaret?"

"Ower muckle—ower muckle," said the housekeeper of Greenshaw, lifting her apron to her eyes; "oh, for onysake dinna gang in! —and yet he maun ken—there's nae use trying to keep it frae him."

The last part of the sentence was spoken under her breath; I became very much agitated.

"What is it, Margaret? Is Lilias ill? What has happened?"

"I'll tell ye, Mossgray," said Margaret, quickly, the arm which she had extended to bar my entrance falling to her side. "It wad be dearly telling her, she had been ill this day. She'll live yet to ken, that the sorest fever that ever chained a mortal to a sick bed wad hae been a blessed tether o' her wilful feet this woefu' morning. Dinna think o' her, Maister Adam. I ken it's hard, but ye maun try; dinna think o' her —she's no wurdy o't."

I clutched the woman's arm, angry and eager. I could not speak.

"Weel then, she's gane—she's away—her that was the light o' our e'en—that we couldna see ill in—that I've heard ye even to the very angels, Mossgray. She's gane—fled out from her father's house with yon young haverel o' a doctor, that has neither wealth to keep, nor wit to fend for her. Oh,

guid forgie me, Mr. Adam! what have I dune?"

My face alarmed her, I fancy. I pressed blindly in—Walter Johnstone stood before me. I was close upon him before I was aware of his presence; I looked in his face.

He turned from me with a burst of emotion, which seemed to wake me from some terrible nightmared sleep.

"Mossgray, I did not know it—I had no suspicion of this. Believe me, Adam, believe me, that I am blameless! She has deceived us all!"

I felt a hoarse contradiction struggling from my dry lips—still I could not hear *her* blamed. Then I turned away; I could hold no further parley with any one; I hurried into the sheltering solitude of my own lonely house.

The bright world without mocked and scorned me—the passers-by looked wonderingly at my stricken face. I could not linger by the waterside now, in the first shock of my vanished and ruined dreams. I fled into this solitary room, within the silent walls of which, so many slow years have passed since then, and threw myself into my chair, and pressed my throbbing head between my hands. It was only then that I realized what had come upon me.

I am an old man now, and these passionate struggles of youth have faded in the far distance, veiled in the gentler mists of memory. Yet I do remember them—I do remember me of minute and trifling things—the open book lying there upon this floor—the solitary lily drooping in its vase—the

snowy leaf that had fallen upon the window-ledge below; and how the pale and fierce light of my calamity fixed the image of them for ever on the tablets of my heart. I remember—it is not such seasons that men can forget.

I had lost her for ever—alas! that was not all—she had never been. The conviction forced itself upon me till I grew well nigh mad. I dashed my clenched hands into the air; I could not restrain the wild fit of passion, the irrational frenzy that possessed me. I was alone! the things which I had worshipped and made my idols were things of air—mists of my early morning, melting away before the stern and sober light—and I was left here desolate, forlorn, and solitary, and there was nothing true under the sun.

It is a bitter and a sorrowful thing to mourn for the dead—to lament over those who have gone away out of this shadowy land into the brighter country, where they yet are, and shall be, all the more sure in their wonderful existence that we see them not. But to mourn for those who have never been—to behold stars fall from your horizon, the glory of whose shining was but a phantasm of your brain, a creation of your own soul; to awake suddenly from your contemplation of some noble and beautiful spirit, the fairest that ever gladdened mortal vision, and to find that it *is* not, and *was* not, and that the place, which in your dream was illuminated by its glorious presence, is filled by a shadowy thing of unknown nature, which you never saw before—this is the bitterest of griefs. If

there is sorrow more hard than this, I bow my head to it in fear and reverence; but this is my woe, and prince of woes.

Drifting from false anchorage, surrounded by spectral ships, and ghostly receding shores, hopelessly driven over the treacherous sea; with no light but an indefinite twilight, sickening the faint heart with visions of shadowy haven and harbour, and false security. A world of mists—a universe of uncertain, unknown existences, which are not as you have dreamed, and among whom you must go forth alone, no longer devoutly to believe and warmly to love, but to grope darkling in the brightest noonday, to walk warily shutting up the yearning heart within you, in jealous fear. It is hard to make this second beginning—hard to fight and struggle blindly against this sad necessity—yet the

poor heart yields at last; either to put on the self-wounding mail of doubt and suspicion, or to live in dim and mournful patience, a hermit all its days.

CHAPTER VIII.

Oh! wherefore should I busk my heid?
Oh! wherefore should I kame my hair?
When my true love has me forsook,
And says he'll never loe me mair.
Oh, Mart'mas wind! when wilt thou blaw
And shake the dead leaves aff the tree?
Oh, gentle death! when wilt thou come
And take a life that wearies me?

OLD BALLAD.

I TOOK little note of how months or weeks went after that era. I lost that summer time. It has fallen entirely from the reckoning of my life, leaving only some

vestiges of what looks now like incipient madness behind; for I was entirely alone; shut out as much from that ordinary communication with the world, which painfully and beneficially compels the suppression of one's agony, as I was from all human sympathy, all kindness, all compassion. I had lost all; my dreams of a brighter home —my friends—all were gone. Hew Murray far away in India, and his sad sister Lucy alone in Murrayshaugh—to no others in the wide world could I look for any of those gentle offices which belong to friendship; and the one was thousands of miles away—the other was no less solitary, no less stricken than I.

I did not see her during the whole of that summer. Had there been no cloud overshadowing her own lot, I believe I might have sought the balm of Lucy's pity, and

perhaps been in some degree comforted; but as it was I never sought to see her—I saw no one—I shut myself up through those scorching summer days—I remember yet how their unpitying sunshine sickened me to the very soul—in this solitary room. I wandered ghost-like on the waterside at night; I neglected everything that I had formerly attended to. I held no communication even with the servants of my lonely household, which I could possibly avoid. It was little wonder that they should think me crazed; the belief shot in upon my own brain sometimes like an arrow—almost the consciousness that I was mad.

I might have been—how soon I know not—but that I was mercifully snatched from the edge of the precipice.

The summer was over, the autumn days were darkening and growing chill, and the

wan water of Fendie carried showers of faded leaves upon its bosom, and grew husky and dark with frequent floods. The transition from the fierce summer sunlight soothed me. These six terrible months had done on me the work of years. I was young —almost a lad still—but I had always been older than my years, and pain brings with it unenviable maturity. In my solitude I felt untimely age come upon me; I carried in my youth's frame a man's worn-out heart.

My housekeeper, Nancy Mense, suffered no one to come near me but herself; and her own services were rendered in silence, with something of that compassionating awe, which we hear is paid to the victims of mental malady in the East. I had never observed this until the day of which I am about to speak.

It was a dim, cloudy, October day, over-

cast with showers, and I was subdued and softened; the drooping, disconsolate sky, and damp air, seemed to hush the fiery pains within me. Mrs. Mense entered my apartment, and without speaking, laid a letter upon the table. I noticed a painful solicitude in her face, as she looked at me before she left the room; I took up the letter—it was from Lucy Murray.

"We shall be far away before you receive this, Adam. I write, because hereafter you might think I did you wrong in sending you no farewell. Of our own affairs I can tell you little, even if *now* you cared to hear of them. I can guess that my father gives up almost all he has; all the land, everything but a bare pittance that will merely maintain us—and the house. He has not parted with Murrayshaugh itself. He vows he never will—but utterly reduced in means

as we must be, we must leave it now—perhaps—perhaps sometime, if good days ever come, to return home again.

"I dare not tell you where we are going; indeed, I do not even know. You know my father's harsh and haughty pride; he says no one shall see our poverty who has ever heard our name before. He might have lingered longer I believe, had I not told him of your generous offer; he took it, as I fancied he would, with hard and bitter anger as a humiliation. Yet thank you again, Adam, for thus cheering me, when the world indeed was black enough around us.

"For yourself what can I say, Adam Graeme? that you are not alone; but alas! that is small consolation. Who can tell the appointed place which this trial has in the lives of each of us, the appointed purpose for which it has been sent? Adam, let us

not look upon those wrecks of the vain dreams we fancied true; all is not untrue, though these are; all is not dark because these lights have failed. The feverish flashing of these meteors is gone for ever; but there remains the sober, stedfast, healthful light of day, the sunshine of heaven over all.

"Adam, let us awake; let us think no longer of those who have done us wrong, but of Him who took so grievous wrong upon Himself for our deliverance. It is not meet that the lives for which He paid so wonderful a price should go down ignobly to the grave; do I need to say more to you? do I need to do more than bid you arise Adam, for His sake, and do the devoir of a man, whether He send sunshine or gloom, a dark day or a bright.

"I have only one word to say more; be careful, Adam: look well to your words

and deeds, lest the tempter take advantage of them to bring more sin among us. I cannot venture to speak more plainly, but as you would have others—others whom both of us have held very dear—preserved from a deadly snare and sin, look heedfully to yourself, and let this wild grief engross you no more.

"Write to Hew; and remember us all if we never meet again. Farewell, Adam, and farewell.

"Lucy Murray."

I was roused by Lucy's letter, roused in some degree to remember my manhood, and to think how I wasted it; but one struggle does not overcome a grief like this. So I fell into a bitterly selfish mood, contrasting her lot with mine—her cold womanlike submission with my self-torture—and while I

thought of the conclusion of her letter, with a certain degree of idle languid wonder, I hugged my calamity closer to my heart. No one had fallen from so bright a heaven into so blank an earth as I; no one had ever equalled my misfortune, and who but myself could comprehend my grief.

The wailing breeze suited me; I opened the window and leaned out, resting my brow upon my hands. Heavy raindrops fell from the eaves upon my unsheltered head—I did not heed them.

The sound of voices below arrested my attention; I remember wondering that they did. No later than the day before, they would have made me shrink into myself jealously, in fear of contact with the speakers; now I only remained still and listened.

"My good woman, I want to see Mr. Graeme," said a strange voice; "I assure

you I will take no denial from *you*, so it is needless to keep me here on the damp soil—my feet are quite wet enough already."

"Your feet are nae concern o' mine," said Mrs. Mense, with some ill-humour in her tone; "nae doubt ye can change them when ye gang hame, like other folk. But my maister's no heeding about seeing strangers; and sae I tell ye—no meaning ony disrespect—once for a'."

"But your master does not choose to let you answer for him, I presume," said the stranger. "You can surely ask him at least."

"And wha has as guid a right to answer for him, puir lad!" said Mrs. Mense, her voice sinking to an under-tone, "as me, that have fended for him a' his days? I tell ye there's nae need for asking, Sir; I ken weel enough he'll no see onybody."

"This is insufferable!" said the applicant

for admission. "Here, my good girl, do *you* go and tell your master that I want particularly to speak with him—I, Doctor Pulvers of Edinburgh."

"Eh, I daurna for my life!" exclaimed the shriller voice of Janet, Mrs. Mense's niece; "I wadna face Mossgray for—"

"Haud your peace, ye silly tawpie!" cried Mrs. Mense. "Do ye mean to say *that's* like a gentleman, speiring at the fuil of a gilpie, and me here?"

"Don't be afraid, my girl," said the stranger. "What is it that alarms you for Mossgray?"

"If you say anither word o' your havers, I'll fell ye, Jen!" exclaimed my housekeeper, in a voice shrill with passion. Then I heard a slight noise, as if the girl had made her escape.

"Well, Ma'am," said the stranger, "I

hope you'll condescend to inform me, what special reason you have that I should not see your master."

Mrs. Mense seemed to falter.

"I've nae special reason, Sir; only if Mossgray doesna heed about seeing strangers, it's nae business o' mine or yours either."

"But why does he object to see strangers?" persisted the pertinacious visitor.

"I didna say he objected; I only said he wasna heeding; and it's no my place to be aye asking the whys and the wherefores. Maybe you never were no weel, or had a sair heart yoursel? and if a gentleman like the laird canna be fashed wi' a' the gangrel bodies that come about the town, naebody has ony business wi' that."

"But I am no gangrel body," said the stranger. "Come now, you have kept me out long enough; if the young man is

unwell, that is only another reason why I should see him—I'm a physician."

"I didna say he was no weel."

"Then, in the name of wonder, what did you say?" exclaimed the stranger. "I shall have serious suspicions, I assure you, my good woman, if you answer me so. Why was the girl afraid to speak to her master? and what do you mean?"

The heavy drops from the eaves had fallen one by one on my head—my hair was wet with them—my brow damp with more painful dew. I rang my bell hurriedly.

"Ye can bide till I come down," I heard Mrs. Mense say, as she shut the door, "and I'll ask the laird, since ye will hae't; but ye'll stay where ye are till I come back again."

In a minute or two after she appeared at the door of my study; her ruddy face was

paled by emotion, and her eyes turned upon me with a painful solicitous look that smote me to the heart.

"What is the matter?" I asked as calmly as I could, "and why do you not bring that man up to me at once, Nancy, instead of keeping him so long at the door?"

Again she looked at me—a conscious, terrified look, which I trembled to interpret.

"Oh, Mossgray! for the Lord's sake tak tent o' yoursel! you're an innocent lad—ye aye were an innocent lad—ye kenna what ill may be brewing. I saw ane that saw Mr. Charlie in the toun yestreen—oh, Mr. Adam, dinna look sae fearsome!—and if ye canna meet this man—if ye've ony fear—just say the word, and I'll send him away."

I felt large drops of moisture burst upon my brow; I shuddered through my whole frame; I felt an irresistible inclination to flee

away, and escape from all these miseries for ever. I had indeed awakened from my frenzy of grief—and such an awakening!

"Why should I fear to see him?" I asked, the words refusing to come plainly from my stammering tongue. "What is this? Do you think—do you think I am mad?"

She did not answer; but with tears streaming from her eyes, she continued to fix that painful, terrified, conscious look upon my face.

I felt my nostril dilate—I felt some bitter scorching tears flood my eyes. Then I became suddenly calm.

"God help me!" I exclaimed in my agony, and my prayer was heard.

I grew calm in a sudden consciousness of restored strength. I thought steadily of Lucy

and her warning; of this humble woman here, whose honest heart sorrowed and laboured for me. I was roused—I put my wrongs forth, out of my heart, and committed myself to God.

"Now," I said, "let him come up."

My kind housekeeper withdrew, wiping the tears from her cheeks. I saw she had acquired some sort of trembling confidence from my bearing; then I did what I could to make my appearance less conspicuously negligent, and then with a nervous concentrated quietness, I waited for my visitor.

He looked me very steadily in the face, with a singular emphatic look. I did not think at the time what was the meaning of this, or it might have raised a ferment in my veins, and made me appear as they wished me. As it was, I saluted him calmly, gliding

at once into my usual manner, and feeling with a consciousness of unspeakable relief, that I was myself again.

"I have been residing in the neighbourhood for a week or two, Mr. Graeme," said my visitor, after introducing himself as Doctor Pulvers of Edinburgh, "and hearing that you were in delicate health, I took the liberty of volunteering a call; that is to say—for I am taking too much credit to myself—some of your friends begged me to do so, expressing themselves very anxious about you."

"My cousin, Mr. Charles Graeme, I presume?" said I. "My friends are not so many, that I should have any difficulty in discovering them."

Doctor Pulvers looked confused. "No, no. Mr. Charles, whom I have the pleasure of knowing, is no doubt much attached to

you, Mr. Graeme; but to tell the truth, the principal person was a lady—and a very young and charming one, I assure you. Mrs. Edward Maxwell."

It was a lie, I knew, and I contained myself—the person who bore that name was not my Lilias; but I would not have inflicted on Charlie such a pang as shot through my heart, while these words were deliberately pronounced in my ear, for all the evil he had done, and for all he designed to do. This was the application of the touch stone; my simple unsuspicious wits were miraculously sharpened as I thought—I saw that this was the test.

"Mrs. Maxwell is very kind," I said, and I did not falter.

Then he began to inquire into my symptoms.

"This is quite useless," I said. "I cannot

suppose, Doctor Pulvers, that you can have been in the neighbourhood as you say, without hearing from some benevolent friend the history and origin of any sufferings I may have been enduring. Such as they are, they belong to myself alone and admit of no probing; but I am glad that I can authorize you to satisfy the sudden anxiety of my friends, by an assurance of my rapidly progressing recovery. I beg you will carry my thanks to all; but symptoms I have none to tell you, unless it were of one or two swellings of indignation which I have been sensible of lately—and that I presume is a tolerably healthful emotion, and one which you are not accustomed to class as a symptom of disease."

Doctor Pulvers looked annoyed and discomfited, and I became sorry for him; however he changed the subject with

admirable art, and had plunged me into a long discursive conversation before I was well aware. He was an intelligent, agreeable man, and I had shut myself out from all society so long, that I forgave him the object of his visit, and would have almost forgotten it, had he not with most delicate tact and *finesse*, when he fancied me completely off my guard, suddenly introduced that name again, which made my whole frame thrill as with a wound, and brought the moisture in cold showers to my brow. He repeated this again and again, but each time I conquered.

At last he rose to leave me.

"Mr. Graeme," he said, offering me his hand, and looking again in my face, but this time with a less singular steadiness of gaze than before, "I assure you I am most happy that I have found you so much better

than your friends imagined. I congratulate you heartily on your evident sound health and good constitution; but, if you will permit me to advise, do not try it so severely as you have done, and come yourself and let all interested in you, see, how perfectly competent you are, on this, and all other matters, to judge for yourself."

His tone was grave and significant—I believed the man. He was glad that his mission had failed; he was glad that I was not added to the list of his miserable patients. I had strength enough left to part with him in firm calmness—nay, I went further; I accompanied him to the door, and saw him leave Mossgray.

And then—those bitter, scorching, desperate tears of manhood that burned upon my cheek—those convulsive sobs that shook me with their fierce strength—this fearful

loneliness, which left me a prey to all the fiery fancies within, and all the secret foes without—"God help me!" I had need.

A sudden fancy took me, as I wrestled fiercely with this fierce affliction. I left the house, and hurried along that side of the grounds of Mossgray which immediately skirts the road—where there was a wall of four or five feet high, lined by old trees, which hung their high foliage over, shadowing the highway below. They were nearly bare then, but under the sombre covert of a group of firs, and taking advantage of the stump of an old ash tree, I ventured to look over. Doctor Pulvers was proceeding at a dignified slow pace along the road, while some one approached hurriedly in the other direction—I looked again; it was Charlie. They must meet immediately beneath the spot where I

stood — I drew back among the firs and waited.

"Well, Doctor?"

"You have fortunately been quite misinformed, Mr. Charles," said the constrained voice of the physician. "Your cousin has as perfect possession of his faculties as either you or I. I am glad to be able to inform you of his perfect health. He is not either very robust or very happy, I dare say, and has the good sense and courage not to veil the latter, with false pride or levity, as I have seen many young men do, but his constitution is sound, and his mind elastic. I have not the slightest fear of him."

There was a dead pause; for a moment or two after, Charlie said not a word. Then he exclaimed, somewhat loudly:

"Well, of course I am very happy to hear it. The more fool he, to give these

gossips the chance of speaking of him so; but Adam was always a sentimental fellow. Of course it is a great satisfaction to me, to find it all groundless."

They passed on. I heard no more of their conversation, nor wished to hear; and I was too thoroughly worn out to be moved by my former passions, either of sorrow or anger. So I took rest—not very quiet nor peaceful, but still more natural and refreshing than I had known for many nights and days.

CHAPTER IX.

There is no light in earth or heaven
But the cold light of stars,
And the first watch of night is given
To the red planet Mars—
Is it the gentle star of love?
The star of love and dreams?
Ah, no! from that blue tent above
A hero's armour gleams.

LONGFELLOW.

I WAS roused. I began to understand the necessity of that ruling one's own spirit which is greater than taking a city. I began to see that my self-martyrdom with all the

indulgence of its pain, was but, in its kind, a selfish pleasure after all, and that the duty before me, was not any shutting out of the common mercies of the world, or lingering act of self-torment, but a firm and manly subduing of my sorrow. It is a trial even, to make this discovery. It is a hard test of patience, when the soul quivering with its own suffering yearns to plunge into some great matter—to endure, to do, to sacrifice —and feels within its aching veins the spirit of a Xavier, eagerly flying to the painfullest labour, and refusing the solace of usual comfort—to have the blank of a steady endurance offered to it instead; to be compelled to yoke its turbulent might of grief again to the common toils of every day; to put on the usual smile, to draw the usual outer garment of ease and seeming peacefulness over the wild pulses of a wounded

heart. I say you shall find more scope for desperate bravery in this than on any louder field of battle; for true it is, and of saddest verity, that there be many men to whom taking a city is a small and light matter, in comparison with the firm ruling of this precious stronghold, and violent garrison within; many men who, like the proud Syrian of old, would willingly dare the fiery process of some sudden miracle, but with hearts full of bitter disappointment and pride, would turn from the placid Hebrew waters in which the blessing lay.

I was bound to the stake. I was compelled to rule myself with the iron hand of a despot; to return to all my ordinary occupations; to come and go as I had been wont; to listen and to speak of things and persons whose names sent my blood flooding back upon my heart, in the shivering heats

and chills of agony, with an assumption of calm ease and indifference the while, terrible to bear. And I did all this, that my only relative might be prevented from dooming me to the prison-house of madness—might be preserved from the sin of unrighteously making himself master of the lands of one by whom he had been regarded as a dearly cherished brother. My lands! I would have given them gladly for the joy of believing that Charlie had not meditated a cruelty like this; but for the sake of my good name, and for his own miserable sake, that his sin should at least go no further than intention, I constrained myself to bear this hard and painful discipline of ordinary life. I could not go away as I longed to do, and in strange lands and among new faces, endeavour to forget myself, and the loneliness which was my fate. I was bound first to

vindicate myself to our little world, and remove all occasion of evil speaking; for my liberty and my means were both concerned. Had Charlie established his case, I must have lost all.

Edward Maxwell had not gone to India. After *her* fate was united to his, her father made some exertions to establish them at home. They were shortly going to Glasgow I heard, but as far as I could I shut my ears to their name; and though many mentioned them before me with cruel smiles, there were some who knew more truly the nature of my feelings, and tried to hush the rest. But it is hard to do what I laboured to accomplish. To convince one's-self that the being held highest and most loveworthy through all one's lifetime, has altogether vanished from this earth, though there still remains the external form in which the imagination shrouded so

fair and beautiful a spirit. I knew indeed that the Lilias of my fancy had never been, but I could not mourn for her as for one dead.

No, the dead are sure. Our most jealous fears cannot think of change—our utmost misery of grief cannot suppose end of existence to them. I fancy the very death makes them more peculiarly our own; but far other, and far bitterer, is such a calamity as mine.

I was shortly to prove both.

The Murrays were gone, no one knew whither; a single servant remained in the house, but she could give me no information as to the retreat of her master. I felt that I did wrong to ask her, and when I wrote to Hew, I did not repeat the question.

In the beginning of the year, Hew an-

swered my letter. I remember noticing with sudden fear that the address was not written in his hand; but the long letter within reassured me, and I did not observe, in my eagerness to read it, another brief note which dropped from the enclosure upon the table.

There was a tone of subdued and unexpressed sympathy in the letter which touched me deeply. No one in this world, not even Lucy, could enter into my feelings as Hew could, and what he said was the inferred sorrow of closest friendship; the sympathy which does not speak of your grief, but which enters into your heart, and stands at your own stand-point, and thinks as you think—as you think, but more gently—as you will think when your grief is further away, and in the hushed and quiet land of memory it has become dim and calm.

"Cheerly, Adam," wrote Hew Murray, "we are becoming men; and if there are harder processes involved in that, than in the old disciplines we used to share together, we must nevertheless bear the heavier means for the sake of the greater end. Manlike and masterful as our fathers were, when the old steel breast-plates at Murrayshaugh and Mossgray covered brave hearts beating high to the natural warfare which they carried over the Border. They too must have had foes, less tangible than the rough barons and yeomen of Cumberland, those fighting men of other generations; and I begin to think, Adam, that the natural element of us all is war—active contention, strife of one kind or another—and that we depart from our most healthful state when we lay down our weapons, and endeavour to halt in the inevitable contest. No longer for imprisoned

princesses—though there is right good meaning and simple wisdom in these stories of our youth—nor yet any longer for *los* and fame, but because there is true life and health in the warfare, and because—

"Adam, we have had much and intimate intercourse, but scarcely ever have we spoken together of Him who is the centre of this world's history, the wonderful Presence that pervades all the changes of its many ages past and to come. But Adam, because He bids, because He leads, because He himself for the strife and for the victory's sake was clothed as one of us. It is a wonderful history, that, of this long struggle ascending up to the very source of time, of the good and the evil, the righteousness of heaven, and the sin of earth; and now to mark the individual ways by which we solitary units thus far down in the stream of the

world's existence, are wakened by so many different obstacles, each in his own separate course, to carry on the warfare. To turn from our idolatry of the false beautiful here, to lawful worship of the true sublime yonder; to take up arms for the Lord's sake and do valiant service against His enemy and ours, that ancient Titan, Sin. The true work of a man, the great war worthy this humanity, which He shares who saved it.

"I think it is a gracious and blessed thing, Adam, that this natural propensity to strife within us, should have so noble an outgate. Do you ever think how we used to dream long ago of delivering Scotland? and there are foes greater than the old Edward, scheming against her purity and freedom now. Ah, Adam! you are happy, you are at home, and can do your devoir for our own land and people, while I, a stranger and a

sojourner here, can only strive to maintain the ancient honour of our name, and commend our faith to minds which know not how to receive the one religion—the one Lord. I think I am not the kind of stuff which the mission-man should be made of, for continually I yearn for home.

"You do not tell me if you saw Lucy before she left Murrayshaugh; and I want to ask you a delicate question, Adam, which I should not put to any one whom I trusted less entirely—Charlie Graeme—what of him? Lucy does not speak of him as she once did; her last letter indeed intimates vaguely, that from the change in her own feelings towards him, she has seen it necessary to break the engagement between them. Do you know anything of this? Whether Lucy is sinned against or sinning, I cannot tell—

from her letter, I should fancy the latter; though certainly she is the last person in the world, whom I could think of as likely to change."

Poor Lucy!—in her solitary bravery, her woman's pride, she was stouter of heart than I.

My spirit rose to the encouraging words of Hew. I too, had been thinking more of late, of the true end and aim of life; that momentous matter which always stands out in the twilight of grief, sometimes indeed, arrayed in fantastic lights and shadows, but sometimes distinct and clear as it has been revealed. I had begun to discover how much my wayward soul was out of tune with the infinite mind disclosed to us in revelation, and the harmonious

universe around. The warfare was begun within me. Hew Murray's letter was such as I needed; it stirred me to better things, it made me ashamed of my indolent brooding, my cumbering of the ground.

As I laid it down, I remarked the note which had fallen from its enclosure, and took it up with some curiosity. The handwriting was strange to me, and the first words made me start in the utmost alarm and terror—the remainder smote me down into the blank of utter grief.

"Sir,

"Finding the enclosed letter addressed to you among Mr. Murray's papers, and having heard him speak of you often as a much valued friend, I think it my duty to inform you of a most unhappy occurrence

which if it has not already resulted in death, must have placed him in the utmost danger and made his ultimate fate almost certain. A short time ago, Mr. Murray was despatched on a political mission to the Rajah of——, whom it was thought, his firm and energetic character would especially qualify him for dealing with. The Rajah is an artful, wily, dangerous man, and Mr. Murray knew before setting out, that the mission was of a perilous nature. But our unfortunate friend has not been able to reach the place of his destination. Two or three days ago one of his native servants returned here, worn out with fatigue and want. He states that his master has been made prisoner, by one of the predatory parties that infest that district, and that when he himself contrived to make his escape, Mr. Murray, who had

made a very desperate resistance, was entirely overpowered by his captors, who were stripping him of everything he possessed, including costly presents intended for the Rajah. He was severely wounded, and Doolut (the servant) believes that these fierce native bandits would not encumber their retreat with a prisoner so helpless. At the same time, there is a possibility that his life might be preserved, (though I fear, the chances are all against it) in expectation of a ransom. Every effort has been, and will be made, to discover if he still exists, and the place of his imprisonment; though I can give you very little hope of a favourable result. This most unhappy event has occasioned much regret in all circles here, Mr. Murray having been, for so young a man, very greatly respected;

and I can again assure you that every exertion will be made to discover his fate with certainty.

"I have the honour to be,

"Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"R. CHURCHILL."

The letter dropped from my hands; I was stunned. I had thought of death—in my thankless folly I had almost wooed it for myself — but never had it occurred to me in connexion with my young, strong life-like friends; and Hew — Hew, the dearest, truest, most noble of them all! I groaned aloud in the bitterness of my soul; I had held lightly this terrible hopeless might of death, and now I fell prostrate under its power.

Then I started in a frenzy of hope, to write to the stranger who had sent to me this sad intelligence. I do not know what I said to him; but I remember how I begged and prayed, with involuntary unconscious tears, urging my entreaty aloud in the intensity of my emotion, that nothing should be left undone; that every means that could be used, should be put into immediate operation—that my unknown correspondent would employ agents for me to prosecute the search for Hew. When I had finished, I thought it cold and indifferent —it would not do—I could not be content to depute to mercenary hands such an undertaking as this. I resolved to go myself to India, to seek for my dearest friend.

But in the meantime, there was much to be done. I could not leave home without

making many arrangements, and losing precious time. So I sent off my letter, and began immediately to prepare for my journey.

CHAPTER X.

No hope—no hope! let calm lips say, no hope
To whom hope never was; but as for me
This possible is life—
And if you say it is impossible
Yet up, up to your highest cliffs of ice
I go to light my watchfire—so perchance,
As he may see it from afar; no hope!
There never is but hope where there is love.

OLD PLAY.

LAND! our voyage is just ending, and softly before us in the dawn of the morning, rise the shores of India; the mighty, impotent, fabulous, golden East.

But I was in no mood to indulge in the pleasant excitement and curiosity of a stranger. My anxiety, like other torments, became intolerable as it approached its end, and in feverish haste, I hurried to seek the Mr. Churchill who had written to me of Hew.

He was a civilian, with something of that stiff, well-drilled military look, which such officials acquire from their contact, I suppose, with their warlike brethren. He was a middle aged man of indefinite years, endowed largely with the grave politeness of tone and manner which belongs to your sober, retired major or captain; perfectly urbane and not without its considerable mixture of kindliness, but presenting to a stranger, an unimpressible blank of courteous gravity, which to your shy man is, in most cases, an invincible barrier. I was very much

agitated—I told Mr. Churchill my name. He looked politely puzzled and at a loss. "He was not aware—" I interrupted him with a statement of my errand, and an anxious inquiry for Hew.

The polite, grave man was melted; the muscles of his face moved. "Ah, poor Murray!" he said, in a tone which told me there was no more to hope.

And so it was. Every exertion had been made to ascertain the fate of my unfortunate friend, and it was now certain, Mr. Churchill said, that all hope or chance that he survived was at an end. Nothing had been left undone, for in Bombay, Hew had many friends; but there could be no doubt that he had fallen by the hands of these assassins, and now lay in some unknown desert grave. It was now certain, there could be no doubt. I eagerly asked if this

was all; if they had no positive information of Hew's death.

Mr. Churchill did not comprehend the extreme agitation of my grief. He thought me excited in my intense anxiety, and became again as blankly polite as before. They had no positive information; but the want of it, to those who knew India, was quite enough, he said, and all further search was hopeless

I was not sufficiently indifferent to be content with this. I left him, to seek Hew's servant, and to make another desperate effort to discover his fate. The man Doolut, was a Parsee, and professed attachment to his master too extravagantly to satisfy me, but I took him into my service and immediately began my search.

How long I remained engaged in it, and the travels and perils, and vain hopes, and blank disappointments which I passed through

while pursuing it, I cannot record. I become faint again, as I recall that time, when day by day the deferred hope sickened my very soul within me—I failed; most sadly and utterly failed; yet though the shadows of some thirty years have darkened over Hew Murray's fate, and increased its mystery, I cannot think of it yet, without a flicker of hope, a throbbing sickness of desire, that has well-nigh power to send me forth on the vain quest again. Living or dead, in earth or in heaven, Hew Murray, no man has ever filled your place in your old companion's heart; and though I have had darkness enough in my own life to make me think an early deliverance from these earthly cares a blessing, yet would I give almost all that remains to me, to know that you yet lived and breathed upon this lower world—to

hope that I might look upon your face and hear the voice of your brotherhood again!

For years after that, I wandered about the face of the earth, in all lands and countries, a solitary man; snatching here and there the solace of congenial companionship for a brief space, but only passing forth again to be forgotten. Murrayshaugh and Lucy I never could discover, though I have lingered on the outskirts of many a little French and German town, vainly endeavouring to find some trace of them. Once only, have I had any communication with the family, and that was immediately after Hew's mysterious disappearance, when a few hurried blotted incoherent words came to me from Lucy, bidding me pity her in her misery; she had no one in the wide world, she said, to tell it to but me—and then in her generous gentle-

ness, as if the words of her complaint had burst from her unawares, she essayed to comfort me, and spoke of consolation and hope. Hope and consolation! yes, so wonderful is the fabric of this humanity, that there is no sky too dark for those stars; and our sorrows lie softly on us when they have grown old with us, and become a part of our lives.

With Charlie Graeme I had no more intercourse. He took guilt to himself and never attempted to renew our former intimacy—but the sin that he had clogged his course withal, found him out ere it was far spent. He married the daughter of a Glasgow merchant reputed to be rich, whose great pretensions collapsed immediately after Charlie became connected with his family. This wife had the expensive tastes of her class I have heard, but it happens singularly

that all unsuccessful men have wives with extravagant tastes, so I give little credence to that rumour; however it happened, or whatever were the procuring causes, it is certain that Charlie Graeme, with all his gifts, was in a very short time a shipwrecked man. He died young, in poverty, and debt, and discomfort—his helpless wife did not long survive him, and they left one child—a boy —on the world's hands and mine.

This child I left during his infancy, under the care of a servant of his mother's, and some ten years ago I had him sent to a school in Aberdeenshire, a private place of respectable standing conducted by a pragmatical Aberdeenish man, called Monikie, who was with us at college. The boy's name is Halbert, our most famous family name. He must have nearly arrived at man's estate, but I have never seen him.

I am drawing near the end of my course. I earnestly desire to have my mind preserved from the resentment and pain, of being again brought into immediate contact with those who have so deeply injured me, or with their representatives. For this reason I have never seen Halbert Graeme, and am firmly resolved not to see him. The lad shall have full justice; I will refuse him no needful help in any profession he may choose; but though he is the last representative of our ancient name, he shall not be the heir of Mossgray. I have given Monikie all freedom in providing for him, in a way becoming his father's son—but he is not mine. I do this with no feeling of revenge towards the dead but I cannot adopt or cherish the son of Charlie Graeme.

And Lilias—I have heard that she too

has one child—a girl called by her own name—but these also I cannot dare ever to look upon. Edward Maxwell is dead; he has lived the life of a weakling, and his widow remains in England where he died. I have learned now, in my old age, to think of the Lilias of my imagination as of one who died in the early fragrance of youth, and almost to dream that her gentle, shadowy presence hovers near me, in the twilight of summer nights, when the stately flowers which bear her name, shine like gleams of moonlight in the dim borders of my garden. I can bear the neighbourhood of these lilies now; their pensive beauty soothes me; but though the softening shadows of memory and years have enshrined this lily of my youth, in that radiance of tender melancholy with which we surround those who have

gone down early to peaceful graves, I yet cannot, and dare not enter the presence of that Lilias who has made me a solitary, joyless man. Let me be kept from them and from their children. I cannot endure the pain which their very names inflict upon me—I must always avoid and shun them—I wish them well—all health, and peace, and happiness be with them, and a brighter lot than mine; but let me be left with my dreams; the sole remaining companions, which are with me in my old age and were with me in my youth.

Walter Johnstone is the only surviving member of our joyous boyish party. He is struggling still in the Maelstrom of care and business, maintaining his place well, as I hear, among his compeers, and training, as he can, a large family of sons and daughters.

He still retains Greenshaw, but never visits it; for Walter's wife and children are fashionables in their degree, and think it expedient, as my good friend Mrs. Oswald tells me, to leave the gentle enchantment of distance and ignorance about the very minute property from which their father acquires the landed designation to which we attach a considerable share of importance in Scotland.

Greenshaw is let to strangers—I hear it is greatly altered; but I avoid it in my limited walks, the last association of deadly pain it has, having obliterated in my mind all the former ones of youthful joy and sunshine. It is not in my way indeed, for the water and I travel together—I seldom leave the green line of its banks; I pursue its windings up and down with constant interest and pleasure.

We never weary of each other; those ripples which I have heard all my life, have an articulate tongue to me—they are connected with all the gladness I have dreamt, with all the grief I have undergone; and there are creeks and sunny promontories there, which recall the shining thread of youthful visions till I can almost think I am weaving them again—

> "My eyes are filled with childish tears,
> My heart is idly stirred,
> For the same sound is in my ears
> As in those days I heard."

This spell of local association has always been strong upon me. As I pass along the banks of my ancient and well-beloved companion, the wan water, the changes of my life rise up before me, each with its separate

scene and dwelling-place—these dells and pensive glens — these broad glades, and grouped brotherhoods of old trees—they are peopled with the things that have been; they bear upon them, as upon so many several pages, the story of my life.

And so I dwell among them, and at my pleasure am again a solitary child, a dreaming youth, a stricken man—I feel myself of kin to myself in all these changes. Swiftly these years have carried me over the world's broad highway, but with this white hair upon my head I am still the child to whose first dreams this water murmured its plaintive symphony. I know myself little wiser, and in nothing more thoughtful. It is the things around us that change—it is not we.

For I confess myself as credulous still of ideal generosity and truth, as I was when I

had counted only twenty summers. I have not been able yet to tutor myself to suspicion —the vision splendid has not quite departed —I cannot put the lustre of that celestial light, which once apparelled all things, away out of my eyes, even when those eyes are old; and Nature in her grave nobleness is not less, but more dear now, when I remember that I shall soon bid her good even, to enter into the presence of her Lord and mine. New heavens and a new earth—I cannot sever my human heart from mine own land; and who shall say that those noble countries, casting off all impurity in the fiery trial that awaits them, shall not be our final heaven?

I love to think that it may be so; I love to think that the Lord, in His humanity, looks tenderly upon the mortal soil on which

He sojourned in His wondrous life, and that here, perchance, in these very lands, made holy by His grace and power, our final rest shall be. It may be but a fancy; but it comes upon me with gentle might, like the whispered comfort of an angel. A new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness — a glorified humanity which, remaining human, is mortal no longer; with the judgment and the condemnation, and the wars of the Lord over-past, and the earth and the heaven one fair broad country, and Himself over all, blessed for ever. These are the old man's dreams; and they shed new glory over the pleasant places in which my lines have fallen—

"Oh, ye fountains, meadows, hills and groves!
Forbode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might.
I only have relinquished one delight

To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the brooks that down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped, lightly as they,
The innocent brightness of a new-born day
Is lovely yet—
The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality."

END OF BOOK I.

BOOK II.

RESOLUTIONS.

CHAPTER I.

There was a hardness in his cheek
There was a hardness in his eye.

PETER BELL

"I BEG you will not misunderstand me, Mrs. Oswald; I vow to you that this girl shall never cross my threshold, and if William persists in his folly he must choose between her and me; for assuredly he shall not keep his place with both. I tell you her father was a fool and a weakling, and you know the injury he did me. My mind is made up; before I receive this girl (I care

nothing for her own good qualities—they do not concern me in the slightest) as my daughter, I will disown my son. If he wants to prolong her poverty, and to make himself a servant all his life, let him persist in his madness; and if you encourage him further in it, the consequences lie with yourselves. I have toiled and laboured to enrich him, and if he thwarts me thus, he shall rue it!"

The speaker was a wiry, dark man, about the middle height, with a face in which you could read habitual obstinacy. It had redeeming qualities; you could see how a great enough matter might elevate the constitutional pertinacity into brave determination, and the eyes were intelligent and clear; but the rigid muscles of his mouth wore their sternest expression to-day, and a cloud lowered darkly upon his face. He

was standing with his back to the fire in a good-sized, comfortable dining-room, the front windows of which looked out upon the Main Street of Fendie. The house was withdrawn a little from the line of the neighbouring buildings, in modest dignity, and bore over its portico and stone pillars the important title "Bank;" and the obstinate gentleman in the dining-room within was Mr. George Oswald, at that time the sole representative of banking interests in the borough of Fendie.

The very emphatic speech which we have already recorded, was addressed to his wife, who sat opposite to him. She was very calmly engaged with her sewing, though her face was sufficiently grave to show that her husband's words were not mere empty breath. When he had concluded, she raised her head.

"I cannot see what necessity there is for making any vows to me, George. If you are determined not to hear what I say, and what William says about this very sweet and innocent girl, of course you must have your own way, as you always have; but as for your vows—you know that is quite unnecessary."

"I know no such thing!" said Mr. Oswald, imperiously. "You fancy I will forget by and bye, and that you may renew this subject again; but I protest to you, Jane, that neither your son nor you shall ever move me on this point—that—"

"George," interrupted his wife, "I hear Hope coming down stairs; pray do not let her be a party to this discussion. I am reluctant that she should even know how you regard the Buchanans, for Hope is inclined to have an opinion of her own, and

to express it more freely perhaps than she should at her years. Let us drop this subject, I beg; I promise you *I* will not renew it."

The cloud passed from the banker's face—his stern mouth relaxed. It was the young voice without, singing so gaily as its owner came bounding down stairs, "Hame, hame, hame! oh, it's hame fain wad I be—" that chased the mist from his face and from his mind. He was kind enough in all his relationships, if somewhat exacting and rigid; but he was indulgent to an extent, which only the stern and vehement nature can reach, of all the whims and caprices of his favourite child.

Hope Oswald was fourteen, and had been for two or three years at a famous educational establishment in Edinburgh. Her father looked with natural satisfaction on the houses and lands which his industry had

acquired, read with satisfaction his own name high in the list of bank shareholders in his own private office; was pleased when he saw "George Oswald, Esq., of Fendie," figuring in his local newspaper as connected with some county or borough reform, or public good-work; but the banker's eye looked never so proud as when a metropolitan broad-sheet informed him how, at the examination of the famed establishment in Edinburgh, "Miss Hope Oswald, Fendie" had carried off prize on prize. The stern man read the half-yearly list of school-girl honours with secret exultation. It was a matter of genuine happy pride to him; and Mrs. Oswald smiled within herself, as year after year her husband expressed in joyous terms his wonder, that the name of Miss Adelaide Fendie of Mount Fendie, the daughter of their aristocratic neighbour "up

the water" did never by any chance make its appearance among this honoured number, while "our Hope" had won almost as many distinctions as there were distinctions to win.

But Hope was weary of gaining prizes, and longed exceedingly to return home; so she was granted an interregnum. Six blythe holiday months were to pass before she returned to Edinburgh, and on this same day she had arrived in Fendie.

The age of awkwardness had scarcely commenced with Hope. She had not begun to be self-conscious, and in consequence escaped the inevitable physical attendant of that unpleasant mental state. She did not yet think of people seeing her when she danced about through the rooms and passages, and ran races in the garden, and waded secretly in the water; nor of people

hearing her, as she went about everywhere, singing aloud in the exuberance of her joy. She was only a girl yet: she scarcely felt the budding woman begin to stir within her healthful breast.

So the dining-room door swung open, wider than it needed to do, and Hope came in with a bound. She had hazel eyes and auburn hair, and an animated blythe face, whose claims to beauty, if it had any, no one ever thought of deciding. She was tolerably tall, and tolerably stout, and exceedingly firm, and active, and vigorous. The "Misses" in Edinburgh whispered among themselves, that Hope had a predilection for masculine games, and was as strong as a boy; but Hope denied the slander stoutly, affirming that its solitary foundation was one unlucky slide, and two or three snowballs, in both of which, the stupid and docile Adelaide Fendie,

whom no one thought of blaming, was as much implicated as she.

Hope was rather talkative; she had a great deal to say about her Edinburgh experiences, and both the father and the mother were good listeners; the sterner parent, however, being by far the most indulgent now.

"And what did your friends say when you came away, Hope?" asked Mr. Oswald; "was there much lamentation?"

"They were all very sorry," said Hope, "and they all wished they were coming too; only big Miss Mansfield that's going to India, she did not care, for she thinks we are only girls and she's a woman, and she's always speaking about Calcutta—as if anybody was caring for Calcutta!—and little Mary Wood would hardly let me go, mamma—she wanted to come too. Will

you let her come at the vacation, mother?—for when all the rest go away, Mary has to stay with Miss Swinton, because she has no friends."

"But Miss Swinton is very kind, is she not?" said Mrs Oswald.

"Miss Swinton is always good to everybody," said Hope promptly, "but when little Mary sees us all going away, and nobody coming for her, she greets."—

"She *greets*, Hope!" said Mr. Oswald, holding up his hand in reproof.

"Well, father," said the brave Hope, "it is a far better word than cries:—cries! as if folk had only cut their finger! and Miss Swinton says our tongue is as good a tongue as the English, and we need not think shame of it."

Mr. Oswald submitted to be defeated, well-pleased and smiling—

"And what does Miss Swinton do at the vacations, Hope?" asked her mother.

"I don't know, mother; sometimes she stays at home, sometimes she goes away to some of those places that the Glasgow girls are always talking about—Rothesay, or somewhere about the Clyde. She was there with Miss Buchanan last year; and oh, mamma, I had almost forgotten—how is *our* Helen Buchanan? I must go to see her to-day."

The banker's brow contracted suddenly. His wife was wary, and a good politician; she took no notice of Hope's unsuitable inquiry.

"Miss Swinton went to stay with one of the young ladies, did she? does she do that often, Hope?"

"Sometimes, mother; they are all so fond of her—and I don't think she has ever been in the south country. Perhaps she would

come to Fendie, if you were to ask her, mother, and bring little Mary Wood."

"Well, we shall see," said Mrs. Oswald, "and what about Adelaide Fendie, Hope?"

"Oh, Adelaide Fendie is coming home; the school is not good enough for her; and they're going to have a governess at Mount Fendie, for her, and Victoria, and little Fred—Poor governess! I am very sorry for her, I am sure, whoever she is. I would far rather keep a school like—"

Mrs. Oswald interposed hastily, "Is it some one from Edinburgh, Hope?"

"No, indeed, mamma. Only somebody from England that Mrs. Heavieliegh knows; and I almost hope she will be as stupid as they are, for if she is not, they will kill her. I would not live at Mount Fendie for all the world; and no one can teach Adelaide

anything, except to do Berlin work, and thump, thump upon the piano."

"Come, Hope, this is too bad," said her smiling father. "I hope you can thump upon the piano to some purpose yourself. We must hear you to-night, you know."

"I don't care about it, father," said Hope; "it is very dreary, except folk will just let me play my own tunes; but then there's these awful waltzes and things, that were never made for anything but people's fingers. Adelaide could play them for days, father; but they make me dizzy; for there's nothing but noise in them."

"I am afraid you are quite giddy enough already, Hope," said Mr. Oswald.

"Miss Swinton says I am sensible," said Hope, with offended dignity. "Miss Swinton says she can trust me with the little ones

better than Miss Mansfield,—and Miss Mansfield's seventeen!"

The father and mother laughed; but Miss Swinton's testimony to Hope's good sense pleased them nevertheless.

"Adelaide is coming home in a week," said Hope, "and she said the new governess would be at the Mount before her. I am to go up every day, Adelaide says, if you will let me, mother; and I would like to go sometimes, but not so often; and I want to go to Mossgray, to see old Mrs. Mense, and the Laird; and up to Friarsford to Maggie Irving, and down to the Waterfoot to see the Flower of Fendie; but first of all—"

"That will do, Hope," said her mother, fearful that the interdicted name might fall from Hope's gay lips again; "but I think

you might show us those drawings of yours that you used to write so much about :—you can arrange your visits to-morrow."

"But I want to go into Fendie, to-night, mother," urged Hope, "to see—"

"We cannot part with you to-night, Hope," said Mrs. Oswald; "and now go and bring your drawings and let your father see them."

Hope obeyed. Mr. Oswald began to walk about the room, almost inclined to be angry with his daughter; this pertinacious attachment to the one person in Fendie whom he tabooed, and the constant recurrence of her name, annoyed him greatly; and the banker had a consciousness that his wife and his son William were much more likely to submit, so far as external action went, to his stern will, than was the much privileged girl-daughter, who appeared fully as much

inclined to sway him as he was to sway her, and did it as effectually. The grave and painful constraint with which William curbed a will as strong as his father's, raised in the banker's mind an angry feeling of antagonism; but the frank resistance of Hope was much less easily managed. Mr. Oswald began to feel an involuntary "*drither*" as to his success in this part of the contest—a dubious consciousness that Hope might be too many for him.

The exhibition of drawings did not succeed. Hope perceived that there was something wrong, and with eager girlish curiosity could not rest till she had fathomed it. William was strangely grave and taciturn she thought; she seized the earliest opportunity of questioning him.

By the dining-room fireside, the brother and sister sat in the twilight alone.

Hope took advantage of the propitious moment.

"William, is there anything the matter?"

William stirred the fire thoughtfully and sighed. The light threw a gleam upon his face, and made it look very grey and grim, as his sister thought. Hope was not inclined to wait for his tardy answer; she plunged into the middle of the *questio vexata.*

"William, I want to know about Helen Buchanan."

William started.

"Hush, Hope—do not speak of her, I beg."

"Why?" said Hope. "I like her better than anybody else in Fendie: why should I not speak of her?"

There was no point on which Hope and her taciturn brother agreed so perfectly. He

smiled a momentary smile, and then answered gravely.

"Because you do like her better than any one else in Fendie, you must not speak of her, Hope—and especially recollect that her name must not be mentioned before my father, unless you wish to hear her spoken of with anger and disrespect, which I am sure you do not."

CHAPTER II.

If I may not speak, I pray
All the words I have to say
  Where shall I go hide them?
Nought say I 'gainst words of thine,
Do not listen, father mine—
  So you need not chide them.

SONG.

Hope Oswald was very much puzzled. She could by no means understand why this perfectly unreasonable interdict should be put upon her free and unfettered speech, and

was not in any degree inclined to submit to it. She resolved to be at the bottom of the mystery.

Mr. Oswald and William were no sooner fairly lodged in the office the next morning, than Hope began her investigation. Mrs. Oswald sat sewing again; she had an old-fashioned horror of idleness.

"Mother," said Hope, "I want you to tell me what ails Helen Buchanan?"

"Hush, my dear!" said her mother.

"But why should I hush, mamma? and why am I never to speak about Helen? William told me the very same; and it's too bad—as if you could not trust me!"

"What makes you think there is anything to trust you with, Hope?" said Mrs. Oswald.

"Oh, I know—because you will not let

me speak, and say always, hush! hush! Mother, do tell me: what is the matter with Helen?—what ails her?"

"Nothing ails her, Hope—she is perfectly well."

Hope became very impatient.

"But you know you don't mean that, mamma; there *is* something wrong; and would it not be better to tell me, than to be always saying 'hush!'"

Mrs. Oswald smiled.

"It is not always so easy to tell, Hope:—for instance, why do you call me 'mamma' one moment, and 'mother' the next?"

"Oh, that is easy," said Hope; "because the girls at school say mamma, and it sounds best there; and when I come home, William says mother, and it is home-like and—and the right word; but I forget sometimes, and

mix them at first. So now, mother, if you please, tell me about Helen Buchanan."

"You are a very pertinacious girl," said Mrs. Oswald; "but remember, Hope, if I tell you this, that you must be very prudent and sensible, and never mention it again."

"I will be very prudent and sensible, mother," promised Hope, with a reservation.

Mrs. Oswald hesitated still; the impatient Hope volunteered to thread her mother's refractory needle, and urged her petition still more warmly. A slight fugitive smile crossed the good mother's face—then she became very grave.

"Helen's father died long ago; he used to be very fond of you when you were a baby, Hope; but you cannot remember him."

"Oh, yes! was he not very thin and pale,

mother, with a white high forehead, like Mossgray?—I do mind him."

"Hush, Hope! you are interrupting me now. He was a very delicate, gentle man, this poor Mr. Buchanan; but he was not at all like Mossgray, and when he died, your father and he were not good friends."

"Yes, mother, I know that," said the disappointed Hope; "but is that all?"

"Wait a little; do not be so impatient!" said Mrs. Oswald. "And foolish people said that your father's sternness killed this delicate man. I believe Mrs. Buchanan thinks so still."

Hope started.

"Then Helen will not be friends with us because my father was poor Mr. Buchanan's enemy:—is that it, mother?"

"No, Hope, that is not it. Helen knows that her father was a weak man, and Helen

is a wise, good girl, and would not do anything so foolish; but Helen is only a poor school-mistress, Hope, and your brother William, you know, will be rich."

"Oh, mamma!" exclaimed Hope, clapping her hands as the conjunction of these two names threw sudden light upon the mystery, "are they going to be married?"

"I very much fear you are not the sensible person you call yourself," said her mother; "your father will not let them be married, Hope."

Hope's bright face became suddenly blank.

"Mother, there is nobody like Helen Buchanan in all Fendie! why will my father not let them be married?"

"Because her father did him wrong, Hope; and because she is poor."

"Because she is poor!—Helen is a gentlewoman, mother!—and because her father

did wrong! But that is not Helen's fault. If my father did wrong, no one would blame William or me."

"Take care, Hope; you are treading on dangerous ground," said Mrs. Oswald; "and though it is not Helen's fault, your father has made up his mind, and William must submit."

"But, mother," said Hope doubtfully, "William is old—William is a man."

"And what then?"

"I don't know," said Hope, hesitating; "perhaps it would be quite wrong, but—mother, is William always to do what my father bids him?"

"And why should he not, Hope?" said Mrs. Oswald; "does it alter his duty that he is old?"

"I don't know, mother," said Hope again; "but if my grandfather were living

now, my father would not always ask him before he did anything, as I ask you; and perhaps William is right, and perhaps—mother, what would my father do if William disobeyed him?"

"I believe he would never speak to him again," said Mrs. Oswald.

Hope shrank back and looked afraid.

"And all that he has, Hope, he would take from William and give to you."

"To me, mother? that would not do William any harm," said Hope, looking up brightly; "though if my father would not *speak* to him—but he would, mother—he could not help it."

"My dear, I have known your father longer than you have," said Mrs. Oswald; "and besides, Hope, Helen Buchanan would not consent if your father did not consent; she is as firm as he is."

"Then it is all because everybody is proud, mother," said Hope, turning away disconsolately, "and would rather make other folk unhappy than give up their own will."

"There are some things in the world, Hope," said Mrs. Oswald, "that are of more importance than even making people happy."

"I know, mother," said Hope: "it is best to be *right* always, whether we are happy or not; but this is not right, I am sure—my father does not know—there is nobody in Fendie like Helen Buchanan!"

Mrs. Oswald sighed.

"You must not speak so of your father, Hope; he knows what is right better than you do."

Hope looked sceptical; those frank instinctive impulses of the young heart, which had no complicated mesh of secret motives

to hinder its prompt out-going, were perhaps better guides after all, than the groping, worldly wisdom of elder minds; wisdom whose wary steps are supposed to be guided by the caution of clear-sightedness, when it is only the timid caution of the blind.

"But I may go to see Helen Buchanan, may I not, mother?" asked Hope, after a pause.

"Surely, Hope; I have no wish to restrain you, and your father will not, I dare say, unless you speak of her again before him, as you did yesterday; and you must be cautious of that, for it only aggravates your father's prejudice and vexes William, without doing any good."

"And am I not to speak about Helen at all?" said Hope.

"No, my dear, not now. I do not forbid you praising Helen as frankly as you blame

Adelaide Fendie—and you must restrain that last propensity of yours a little, Hope—but do it cautiously and warily, and let me see something of this wisdom and good sense which Miss Swinton has discovered. You see I trust you, Hope."

Hope drew herself up.

"I will be very careful, mother, no fear but may I go to see Helen now?"

"Helen will be busy now, Hope."

"Well then, come to the Waterside, mother; I want to see Mossgray, and I want to see Maggie Irving. Come!"

The indulgent mother laid aside her work and went.

Friarsford was a farm-house standing on a little eminence at some distance from the Water, and Maggie Irving was the farmer's daughter. She was a year older than Hope Oswald, and one of her Fendie intimates.

The house was only a little out of the direct road to Mossgray, and Mrs. Oswald and her daughter turned up the winding by-way to make their first visit there.

Matthew Irving of Friarsford was wealthy and had some ambition. He was exceedingly desirous to give his children good education, and with the masculine part of them he had succeeded tolerably well, thanks to the academy of Fendie; but the hapless Maggie was less fortunate. She was the only daughter; especial pains, and care, and labour had been expended upon her training, and the father and mother, exulting over their accomplished girl, thought the process a perfectly satisfactory and successful one.

Maggie had been sent to the house of a relative in one of the busy towns of Lancashire, to learn English, and she had learned it to perfection. Maggie had a

piano, and could play you against time, all manner of inarticulate music. Maggie could draw, as three or four copies made from French lithographs—*patterns*, as Maggie and her mother called them—hung there, elaborately framed, upon the walls, to testify.

Moreover, Hope Oswald's quick movements had swept upon the ground a couple of handsome specimens of knitting, displayed upon the arm and cushions of the sofa, before Hope had been ten minutes in the lightsome cheerful apartment, which was the comfortable parlour once, but had now obtained brevet rank as drawing-room. As Maggie hastened to arrange them, she pointed out the stitch to her visitor, and offered to show her the various stock she had. Hope was dismayed; never girl of fourteen was more innocent of stitches than she, and this branch of her friend's acquirements had very little

interest for her. It was not so with Mrs. Irving, a comfortable, kindly, vulgar woman, who was very proud of her daughter's accomplishments, and eager to exhibit them.

"Miss Hope will give you a tune, Maggie," she said; "and you can let her hear how you come on yoursel. She's very good at it, Mrs. Oswald, though she hasna had the same advantages as Miss Hope."

Hope started in alarm.

"Oh, don't let us have any music, Mrs. Irving!—I mean, I shall be very glad to hear Maggie, but I don't like playing."

Mrs. Irving thought the young lady only coy.

"Hout, Miss Hope! a'body that's very good at it makes that excuse, ye ken; and I'm sure ye must aye be getting new tunes in Edinburgh."

"But I don't like new tunes," pleaded Hope.

"Oh, Miss Oswald!" said the astonished Maggie, in gentle reproof.

Hope was offended; Maggie Irving called her Miss Oswald; Maggie Irving had nothing to talk about, after so long a separation, but stitches and new tunes! Their friendship was at an end. Hope walked indignantly to the piano, and played her favourite air of "Hame, hame, hame!"

"It's a bonnie bit simple thing that," said Mrs. Irving, looking proudly at her own accomplished performer, as she took her place at the instrument, by the side of which Hope and her mother were reluctantly compelled to sit for a dull half hour, listening to jingling pieces of music, whose brief moment of fashion was long ago over, and which had

never had anything but fashion to recommend them.

But Mrs. Irving was delighted, and Maggie was exceedingly complacent. Alas, poor Maggie! her fingers were highly educated; her mind was fallow. The thorough training of Hope's Edinburgh school these good folk in Fendie could not reach; but they could reach the superficials, and they were contented.

"Well, Hope," said Mrs. Oswald, in answer to a burst of wonder and disappointment, when they had left Friarsford and its accomplishments behind them; "you remember how you used to resist and be disobedient when your father said that Matthew Irving's daughter was no companion for you."

"But, mother," said Hope solemnly,

"Adelaide Fendie is just the same—and Adelaide ought to be a lady, if being anybody's daughter would make her one; but she is not, for all that."

"Adelaide is only a girl, like yourself, Hope."

"But she is not a gentlewoman, mamma; and she talks about stitches and tunes like Maggie Irving—and I'm sure I don't know what's the use of them."

Hope could not forget her disappointment; there was only one consolation in it. In the midst of all these twinkling artificial lights, the star of Helen Buchanan rose clearer and clearer. Helen was a gentlewoman; and what did it matter that she was poor?

"Yonder is Mossgray!" exclaimed Hope, as they approached the house; "yonder he is, up among the trees, and he has got

something like a letter in his hand. Do you see him, mother ?"

The bank of the wan Water sloped upward into gentle braes, a little beyond the house of Mossgray, and the laird was certainly there, walking among the trees, with a step altogether unlike his usual meditative, slow pace. Hope Oswald was an especial favourite with Mr. Graeme of Mossgray, and he liked her mother; but Mrs. Oswald had too much regard and sympathy for the old man to intrude on his retirement.

"We will go in, and see Mrs. Mense, Hope," she said; "Mossgray seems occupied just now. You will see him another day."

The large old-fashioned kitchen had a separate entrance to itself. The mass of buildings altogether bore evident testimony to the different periods of their erection, and looked, as their owner said, a natural growth

of the home-soil in which the grey walls and rude, dark, massy tower seemed so firmly rooted. A large garden descended from the most modern front of the house to the water, where it was deeply fringed with willows. The clipt, fantastic trees of a generation which admired such clumsy gambols of art were scattered through it, and there was a sun-dial, and many prim flower-beds; but the cherished lilies of Mossgray were not in these stiffly-angled enclosures; their fresh green leaves were beginning to shoot up in the freer borders—those borders on which they gleamed in the dim summer evenings, like errant rays of the moon.

Mrs. Mense was a very old woman now, and invalided. She sat in a great elbow-chair by the fireside, spinning feebly sometimes, and sometimes giving counsel, by no means feebly, to her self-willed niece, the

housekeeper *de facto*. The establishment was a very limited one; besides Janet, and the miscellaneous personage known as "Mossgray's man," there was only one other servant in the house.

"Eh, Miss Hope, is this you?" said Mrs. Mense, "and your mamma nae less, minding the auld wife as she aye does. Effie, ye tawpie, get chairs to the ladies—or are ye gaun ben, Mrs. Oswald, to wait for Mossgray?"

"Mossgray is out, I see," said Mrs. Oswald. "No, Hope came to see you, Mrs. Mense; we will sit down beside you awhile. That will do, Effie."

"And look till her how she's grown!" exclaimed the old woman, "and stout wi't. Ye're no gaun to let down our credit, Miss Hope. Ye'll let the Edinburgh folk see what guid bluid is in thir southland parts.

Effie, gar Janet gie ye the wee cheeny luggie fu' o' cream. Ye mind it, Miss Hope? it belangs mair to you than to onybody about Mossgray."

"But, Mrs. Mense," said Hope, "you did not call Crummie's calf after me, as you said you would."

"My dear lamb! ye wadna have had me to ca' the muckle langleggit haverel of a beast after you, and you a winsome young lady? Na, I ken better manners—and forbye Mossgray said it was nae compliment. But I'll tell ye what, Miss Hope, there's a new powny—the bonniest creature!—and ye'se get the naming o't, gin ye like."

"Where is it?—wait till I see it, mamma!" cried Hope, starting up. Hope had, like most country girls, an especial liking for youthful animals.

"Ye maun hae your cream first," said the housekeeper, as Effie approached with the china luggie, in which, from time immemorial, Hope had received a draught of rich cream on her every visit to Mossgray. Hope hardly took time to taste it; she was too eager to see the "new powny."

"Did you see the laird, Mem?" said Mrs. Mense, with some appearance of anxiety, as Mrs. Oswald waited for her daughter's return.

"We saw him on the knowe," said Mrs. Oswald; "but did not disturb him, as he seemed occupied. I fancy that is one of his favourite spots, Mrs. Mense."

"Na—I'm meaning I dinna ken," said the old woman; "but he's gotten some letter the day, that's troubled him—I canna bide to see him fashed, and he's just unco

easy putten about. Janet, div ye hear the clock? it's twa chappit, and the dinner no to the fire!"

"I ken what I'm doing, auntie," returned the impatient Janet.

"Ye dinna ken onything very wise then," said the dethroned monarch of the kitchen; "it's a bonnie-like thing that the laird, honest man, maun wait for his dinner, aboon a' the rest o' his troubles! I heard him travelling up and down in his ain study-room in the tower, after thae weary letters came in. What gars folk write when they've naething but ill-tidings to tell about, I wad like to ken? and syne out to the Waterside as he aye does when he's troubled—I canna bide, as I was saying, to see him fashed, for—"

"Oh, Mrs. Mense!" exclaimed Hope, bounding in, "be sure and tell Mossgray

that he is not to call the pony anything till I come back again. Mamma, come and see it; it's like as if its coat was all sprinkled, with snow—I think I will call it Spunkie; but that's not a bonnie name. Mind, Mrs. Mense, that nobody is to give it its name but me."

Mrs. Mense promised, and after some further lamentation about her master's supposed trouble, resumed so keenly the dinner controversy with Janet, that her visitors withdrew. It was yet too early to visit Helen Buchanan, so Hope, expatiating on the beauty of the pony, returned with her mother, home.

CHAPTER III.

Oh, youth! for years so many and sweet
'Tis known that thou and I were one;
I'll think it but a fond deceit—
It cannot be that thou art gone;
Thy vesper-bell hath not yet tolled
And thou wert aye a masquer bold;
What strange disguise hast now put on
To make believe that thou art gone?
I see these locks in silvery slips,
This drooping gait, this altered size;
But spring-tide blossoms on thy lips,
And tears take sunshine from thine eyes!
Life is but thought; so think I will
That youth and I are housemates still.

COLERIDGE.

The Laird of Mossgray stood alone

beneath a high beech, whose silvery trunk and delicate buds, made it the most noticeable of all the neighbouring trees. His figure was tall, thin, and stooping; his hair the most delicate silvery gray; his face full of thoughtful fortitude and wisdom in its gentlest guise; but his usual serenity was ruffled to-day, the calm of his meditative age was broken.

Those dim lands of memory in whose gentle twilight he did so much love to wander, among the fairy shadows, tender and pensive, of things which once were stern and hard enough, had been suddenly illuminated by a flash of the intense and present reality which once they had. The old man's quietness had suddenly been rent asunder, and floated away from him like a mist, while the stormy blood of his more vehement days was swelling in his veins again.

He held a letter in his hand; the fingers which traced its trembling lines were now lying in a nameless grave. A worn-out, wearied woman, prematurely old, and glad to lay down her head in that one place where the weary are at rest, was the writer of those earnest, living words. The Laird of Mossgray did not remember that she was old—the past years were in this moment a fable and a dream to him. He thought of Lilias only as he saw her last, enshrined in all the pure and gentle dignity of his young fancies; for Lilias was dead.

And dying, she had revealed to the old man what she was. Not indeed the lofty lady of his dreaming days, but a gentle, chastened, meek woman, who knew now, and had long known the worth of the generous heart she threw away. In the bitterness of his soul he had believed her

an unsubstantial vision; but the faithful hand of death had brought back to him the true Lilias, worthy of the place he had given her in his best days.

"I do not ask you to forgive me," wrote the dying Lilias, "because I know that long ago you must have forgiven the witless girl's heart that did itself so much more wrong than you. I did not know myself, my own slight, shallow, girlish self, and pardon me then, Adam Graeme, that I did not know you. Since then I have learned—what have I not learned that is bitter and sorrowful? Care, poverty, death, and miserable shames and humiliations, such as never crossed your path, have been the constant companions of mine; they are all ending now. I am going hence to my Lord, and to the children whom He

took from me one by one, till my heart was well nigh broken; but I cannot go till I make one prayer to you, one last entreaty for the sake of our youth.

"I would not speak of the time when we last met; in pity to my bitter lot, and to the dead whose faults we lay with them in the grave to be forgotten, as I have laid Edward, and as stranger hands shall soon lay me, do not think of that time. I have one last treasure remaining to me, one last request to make, and there is no one in the world but you whom I have wronged, to whom I can address my prayer.

"Mossgray, I have a child; a friendless, unprotected, solitary girl, who will soon be left utterly alone. If I shrink from subjecting her to the cold charity of Walter's wife, forgive me, because I am her mother.

I know that Lilias is not what I was. I know that our subdued and clouded life, has given to her youth a greater maturity than I had when I was her mother. I have fancied often that Lilias *is*, what you thought me to be, and there has been a sad pleasure in the hope that for her weak mother's sake, your heart would melt to my child.

"I cannot ask you. I feel that I cannot venture to beg of you this last service; my heart fails me, when I remember how little I deserve any grace at your hands. But you who have always been so kind and pitiful, think of the misery of leaving her thus, alone in an evil world. If you think I presume upon you, if you refuse to hear my prayer, I still must plead it for her sake. Adam Graeme, will you protect

my Lilias? Will you forgive the sins we have done against you, and protect our child?"

There was more than this; there were the solemn farewells of the dying, the pathetic earnestness of sorrowful repentance which bade God bless him for ever. Except in his gray hairs, and in the strength which began gently to fail and glide away, Adam Graeme was not old. The tide of his strong and ardent feelings rushed back in that mighty revulsion, with which the generous soul repents when it has blamed unjustly. He remembered no injury Lilias had done him—he forgot the blight of his youth, the solitude of his old age; he only felt that she *was* again, the Lilias of his early dreams; and that the commands she laid upon him were sacred and holy,

a trust dearer than any other thing on earth.

And yet, a few brief days before, the old man had solemnly recorded his resolution to shun their presence; to avoid all contact with Lilias and her child, that the peace of his age might not be broken. Their very name was pain to him; therefore he prayed that he might not cross their path. He resolved to keep himself from any, the most distant intercourse with them. In solemn earnest he formed this purpose, or rather he formed it not: it was the instinctive necessity of his heart.

He remembered it now no more. It was not that he combatted his former resolution; it was swept away before the resistless force of that impulsive, generous heart, which in its solitary pain had

built this barrier about itself; and there was no inconsistency here. Had his ear been dull to the voice of Lilias, had he hesitated to respond to her appeal, then had Adam Graeme in his old age ceased to be consistent to himself; for the same power which made him resolve to keep himself separate and distant always from those whose very names had might enough to move him still, asserted itself in the instant return of all the ancient tenderness and honour, which painfully taken away from the living Lilias, could flow forth unrestrained and unblamed upon the dead.

In the enclosure of the letter, a trembling hand had written the date of the first Lilias's death. It struck with a dull pang the heart to which she was restored, yet only thus he knew, could he have regained her.

That evening, the Laird of Mossgray set out on a lonely journey. Before his going, he warned his anxious housekeeper of the young guest he might probably bring home with him. The intimation occasioned considerable excitement in the little household.

The early twilight of the April night had fallen, when Adam Graeme left the dim lights of Fendie behind him, and travelled away into the darkness, shaping his course to the south. The faint indefinite sounds, and musical "tingling silentness" of the night, came close about him, like the touch of angels' wings. The stars were shining here and there through the soft clouds of spring, and the dim shadowy sky blended its line yonder, in the distance, so gently with the darkened earth, that you

could not mark the place of their meeting. The moon herself had been an intruder there; the subdued and pensive dimness which told of that nightly weeping of the heavens from which the young spring draws its freshness and its life, and the faint shining of yon solitary stars high in the veiled firmament, harmonized most meetly with the lonely spirit of the traveller, going forth to look upon the grave of his dead. The sad, wistful, yearning melancholy which belongs to this hour "between the night and the day," who does not know—those faint hushed hopes, those inarticulate aspirations, turning then, when there is dimness on the earth, to the better something beyond—there are few who have not felt the influence of "the holy time."

A charmed sway it had borne at all times over the mind of Adam Graeme. And now,

it travelled with him like a human friend: in the stillness of his night journey, there were gentle ministrations about him, influences of the earth and of the sky.

CHAPTER IV.

Touch the chords gently—
Those strings are heart-strings, and the sounds they utter—
Be silent when you hear them—are the groanings
Of uttermost pain, the sighings of great sorrow,
Voices from out the depths.

ANON.

ABOUT twelve or thirteen years before the date of our last chapters, a young man from Glasgow with his wife and one child, came as lodgers to a humble roadside cottage not far from the town of Fendie, and very near the Waterside. Walter Buchanan was an invalid.

A delicate sensitive man by nature, whose fine nervous organization was of that kind which is akin to weakness and not to strength—for there are both varieties—his health had been broken by the confinement and harassing labour of his vocation as a clerk in a mercantile office. His wife had a little portion, a very little one, which nevertheless to their inexperienced eyes, seemed able to last long and accomplish much; so on the strength of it, and in obedience to the doctor's peremptory order, that he should have rest and country air, Walter gave up his situation, and the young couple began to make the dangerous experiment of living upon their little capital. The gentle poetic man, had been charmed in his early days, in some chance visit to the neighbourhood, by the stately water and pretty town of

Fendie, and the pleasant remembrance decided their new habitation.

These rash, youthful folk were more fortunate than prudent people might think they deserved. They excited the interest and kindly sympathy of Mrs. Oswald, the banker's wife, and through her, of her sterner husband; so that when the pleasant summer air had done its gentle spiriting on the wan cheek of Walter Buchanan, and he felt himself able for work again—which was happily before his wife's little portion was altogether exhausted—he was received into the bank as Mr. Oswald's clerk.

To be called "of the bank," in a country town in Scotland is a matter of considerable dignity, and the salary, if small, was enough for their limited expenses. The Oswalds were kind and neighbourly; other friends gathered about the gentle couple; and as

they stood in their own garden beneath the heavy branches of their own fruit-trees, in those serene autumnal evenings, watching the sun go down gloriously behind the dark crest of yonder hill, they were wont to render quiet thanksgiving out of full hearts.

This pleasant life continued through ten happy years, and in its placid course the delicate man seemed strengthened in mind no less than in body. His nervous melancholy glided away into graceful mists of pensive thought. The nervous impatience and irritability, which it had once cost him so much pains to subdue, were soothed and softened. He became, mentally no less than physically, as it seemed, a more healthful and a stronger man.

At the end of the ten years his position was changed. They had saved enough to raise their little capital, to a larger amount

than the original sum on which their inexperience had braved the evils of the world. This was invested in the purchase of bank shares, and Walter Buchanan, a clerk no longer, became Mr. Oswald's partner in the agency of the bank.

An unhappy change. The one peculiar, distinguishing feature of the Scottish banking system, over which our economists boast themselves, became a source of constant torment to Walter Buchanan. The quick and prompt decisions of Oswald, in which he could not join, made him feel his own weaker will overborne and set aside. A hundred "peculiar cases," and "very peculiar cases," in which the clear, acute mind of the banker could see no peculiarity at all, troubled the midnight rest of his nervous and tender-hearted partner. That this struggling man whose security was dubious, or that hapless

farmer wading knee-deep in difficulties, whose cash account was already overdrawn, and who wanted more, should be dealt with summarily, was clear to Oswald's steady eye ; but was enveloped in painful mists of distress and perplexity to Walter Buchanan, himself acquainted with all the restless shifts and expedients of the struggling poor.

His feelings became morbid again under that exercise. He imagined himself ill-used, despised, trampled upon, when the finer points of his compassionate and impulsive benevolence came into collision with the strong sense and energy of his partner, who in his turn grew impatient of the sentiment which he thought sickly, and the tenderness which he called weak. There was a rupture at last. A struggling man with dubious security came to Buchanan when Oswald was absent from Fendie. The sensitive man of

feeling forgot prudence in compassion, and by his ill-judged acceptance of the uncertain "cautioner," brought serious loss to the bank. Oswald returned; there were sharp and high words spoken by both, which neither, in a less excited mood, would have given utterance to; and in a storm of bitter anger and wounded to the very heart, Walter Buchanan threw up his situation, dissolved his partnership with Oswald, and left the bank.

Very soon to leave the world; for, before the winter was over, his course had ended. He could not bear such tempests of excitement, for pain to him was agony, and anger madness. So in his weakness he died, and left his gentle widow, and his young daughter to fight with the world alone.

Helen Buchanan was only sixteen. She had a fair proportion of what people call

accomplishments, and might almost have been a governess in a boarding-school or a "gentleman's family;" and beneath the accomplishments there was a sound substratum of education, and a mind matured too early for her own happiness. Fendie was abundantly supplied with *ladies* schools; so Helen in her flush of youthful pride and independence, determined to offer her services to the humbler mothers, and to receive as her pupils not the young ladies, but the little girls of Fendie.

Mrs. Buchanan reluctantly acquiesced. She was a gentle, hopeful woman, accustomed to yield always to the quick impulses and keen feelings of her husband, and now rendering a kindred submission to her daughter. Helen was a very dutiful, very loving child, but her mother's cheerful, patient nature was made to be thus in-

fluenced, and unconsciously and involuntarily the stronger spirit bore the mastery.

So when the first pangs of their grief were over, Mrs. Buchanan regretfully removed her substantial furniture, from the dining-room of which she had been once so proud, and with many sighs saw her little maid-servant arrange in it the bare benches, and large work-table which befitted its new character of school-room; and the youthful teacher began her labours.

These had gone on successfully for four or five years before the pleasant April-tide on which Hope Oswald returned home; eventful years to Helen. It is not well to leave the unconscious happiness of girlhood too soon, even to enter upon the enchanted ground of youth. Toil, poverty, and William Oswald; the three together were well nigh too many for the youthful

champion who had to struggle, single-handed, against them all.

In the twilight of that April evening, she sat in their little parlour alone. The faint firelight gave a wavering flush to the shadowy air of the holy time; and Helen sat in the recess of the window, wandering through the mazes of such a reverie, as belongs especially to her peculiar temperament and mind. For those delicate lines in her face, those continually moving features, those slight starts now and then, and altogether the elastic impulsive energy and life which you could perceive in her figure even in its repose, testified her inheritance of the constitution of her father. With one difference. *His* nervous, sensitive temperament was akin to weakness; hers, with all its expressive grace, its swift instinctive feelings, its constant life and motion, was

strong—strong to endure, although its pain was sorer a thousand times than that of more passive natures—strong to struggle—mighty to enjoy.

She had been out, watching the sun as he shed a golden mist over the dark mass of yonder hill, where it stands out boldly into the Firth, a strong sentinel, keeping watch upon the sea; gleaming in the mid-waters of the estuary, gleaming in the wet sand and shining pools of the deep bay, and throwing out the sunless hillock at the river's mouth with its little tower and quiet houses, in bold relief against the far away mountain, and its mantle of streaming gold. The wonderful sky in the west, the broad bed of the Firth, the sunset and its noble scene—there was an enjoyment in these to the delicate soul of Helen, which

duller natures have not in the greatest personal blessings of the world.

And now, with her pale cheek resting on her hand, and leaning forward on the window-sill, Helen was lost in a reverie. What was it? only a mist of fair thoughts indefinitely woven together; scenes starting up here and there of the future and of the past, with fairy links of association drawing their strangely-varied band together; old stories, old songs, and breath of music floating through all in gentle caprice — the sweet and pleasant gloaming of the mind.

Mrs. Buchanan was out, doing some household business in Fendie, and Helen did not hear the footstep of Hope Oswald as she entered by the garden gate. These quiet houses are innocently insecure; when Hope's

summons remained unanswered, she opened the door herself, and went in.

"Oh, Helen!" exclaimed Hope as she precipitated herself upon her friend, dispersing in that nervous start, all the fair visions of the evening dream. "How glad I am to be home again—how glad I am to see you!—but I scarcely can see you either, because it's quite dark; and Helen—you don't know how I used to weary in Edinburgh just to hear you speak again!"

"Thank you, Hope," said Helen. "I am very glad to see you; or rather to hear you speak, according to your own sensible distinction. Come, we will get a light and look at each other."

Mingling with the quick movement of surprise at first, there had been a deep blush and a temporary shrinking from William Oswald's sister; but another moment restored

Hope to her old privileged place of favourite, and Helen rose, her young companion's eager arms clinging about her waist, to light the one candle on the little table.

The room was small and plainly furnished, though its substantial mahogany chairs and sofa, looked respectable in their declining years. On the carpet here and there were various spots of darning artistically done, which rather improved its appearance than otherwise. A large work-basket stood upon the table containing many miscellaneous pieces of sewing; shirts in every stage of progress, narrow strips of muslin, bearing marks of the painful initiation of very little pupils into the mysteries of the thoughtful craft, mingled here and there with scraps of humble "fancy" work, samplers and the like—all of which the young school-mistress had to arrange and set to rights before the work of to-morrow

commenced. A book lay beside the basket —a well-thumbed book from the library. Helen had been idling; for she sometimes did snatch the brief relaxation of a novel, though Maxwell Dickson, the librarian, had no great choice of literature.

"Oh, Helen," exclaimed Hope, again, when the feeble light of the candle, revealed to her the pale face of her friend. "I am so very glad to see you again!"

"Thank you, Hope," repeated Helen; "how you are growing—you will be above us all by and bye. When did you come home?"

"Only yesterday," said Hope; "but are you sure you are quite well, Helen?"

"Quite sure—why?"

"Only because you look pale—paler than you used to do; and, Helen, what makes you sigh?"

"Did I sigh?" said Helen, her delicate wavering colour gradually heightening beneath the girl's steady affectionate look. "I did not know of it, Hope—it must have been for nothing, you know, when I was not aware of it."

"Ah, but it was when you were sitting in the dark before you saw me," said Hope gravely, "and you must have been thinking of something."

Helen's colour heightened more and more; yet she smiled.

"Are you going to be an inquisitor, Hope? Do you know people sometimes think very deeply, as you saw me, to-night, about nothing? Ah, you shake your head and are very grave and wise, and experienced I see. Come, I will show you what Cowper says about it."

"Oh, I know," said Hope. "I learned

all that for Miss Swinton because she likes Cowper; but Helen you are not so clever as one of our young ladies; it's Miss Mansfield you know, that's going to Calcutta, and she's old—she is near eighteen I am sure—and she sighs; but when Miss Swinton spoke to her about it, she said she was only drawing a long breath. I think," said Hope disconsolately, "that the people in Fendie are very dull and sad now; for everybody draws long breaths."

"Have you seen so many, Hope," said Helen with an uneasy flush upon her face, and with some evident interest in the question; those constantly moving features were sad tell-tales.

"I mean just the people I care about," said Hope, "there is poor William. I do not know what ails William—for he sat in the dark like you, last night, and will always

lean his head upon his hands, and sigh—sigh—and my mother—I wish you would not all be so sad."

Helen Buchanan turned round to examine the contents of her work-basket. Her slender figure was very slightly drawn up; something almost imperceptible like the faint touch of wind upon leaves passed over her; you could not tell what it was, though you could read its swift expression as clearly as written words. Pride—sympathy—a consciousness that moved her heart and yet made it firmer; but Hope's piece of incidental information did not sadden the face of Helen.

Hope had a comprehension of—though she could by no means have explained how she comprehended, the silent language of Helen Buchanan's looks and motions; and she arrived at a pretty accurate conclusion in

her own simple and shrewd reasonings on the subject. Mrs. Buchanan came in so soon that she could try no further experiments with Helen; but as she past through the dim road, half-street, half-lane, in which their house stood, and came into the quiet Main Street of Fendie, with its half-shut shops and groups of wayside talkers, great schemes began to germinate within the small head of Hope Oswald. If only that very unreasonable opposition of her father's could be overcome, Hope decided that William would be condemned to draw long breaths in the dark no longer. "Miss Swinton says I am sensible" mused Hope within herself, "and my father says I am clever. I don't know—I think it will turn out the right way some time, and we shall all be very happy, but just now—I will try!"

And immediately there flitted before the

eyes of Hope, in the gentle darkness of the April night, a fairy appearance; we do not venture to say it was anything very ethereal. It was only a vision of a lilac satin frock like that famous one which Miss Adelaide Fendie, of Mount Fendie, wore at her sister's marriage, and very fascinating was the gleam which it shed about the young schemer as she lingered at her father's door. Hope Oswald was only fourteen.

CHAPTER V.

We must at first endure
The simple woe of knowing they are dead—
A soul-sick woe in which no comfort is—
And wish we were beside them in the dust!
That anguish dire cannot sustain itself,
But settles down into a grief that loves,
And finds relief in unreproved tears.
Then cometh sorrow, like a Sabbath! Heaven
Sends resignation down and faith; and last
Of all there falls a kind oblivion
Over the going out of that sweet light
In which we had our being.

PROFESSOR WILSON.

In the waning afternoon of another dim spring day, the Laird of Mossgray entered

the Cumberland valley, to which the letter of Lilias had directed him.

He had traversed the fair country beyond Carlisle, with its sloping glades, and belts of rich woodland, and now had reached a chiller and more hilly region, whose bleak inhospitable fells, still scarcely touched by the breath of spring, did yet reveal home-like glimpses, here and there, of sheltered glens and quiet houses, dwelling alone among the hills. He had to pass several of the pleasant towns of Cumberland before he reached the sequestered hamlet, in which the last days of Lilias had been spent. It lay in a nook by itself, a scanty congregation of gray roofs, with the church "a gracious lady," as was the poet's church among the hills, serenely overlooking all, reigning over the living and the dead. From the end of the little glen, you commanded the long range of a wider

and more important valley, at the further end of which lay one of the most picturesque of those northern towns, its gray limestone buildings making a sheen in the distance, and a delicate cloud of smoke hovering about the points of its white spires, like something spiritual, marking where household hearths were gathered together in social amity. Not far away lay the consecrated country of the lakes; and everywhere around, bare, brown, scathed hill-tops stood out against the sky.

Mossgray proceeded to the churchyard first of all; all things beside were strange to him in the unknown village, but here he had a friend. After long search among the gray memorials of the forefathers of the hamlet, he came upon a green mound marked by no name, where the soft, green turf was faintly specked with the fragile blue of the forget-me-not; in the village churchyard this alone

and the daisy found a place — occupants more fit than the garish flowers with which modern taste has peopled the cities of the dead. The Laird of Mossgray turned aside to ask the name of the occupant of this grave. It was a Scottish widow—said the sexton—lately dead, whose name was Maxwell; the inquirer returned again, and seating himself on the hillock, covered his face with his hands. The old man never knew how long he lingered there. He was not an old man then; the fervid affection of his youth —the burning grief of his early trial, were in his heart passionate and strong as when they thrilled it first; and it was not until the night fell and the dew dropped gently on him, that the sacred sorrow which belongs to the dead, came down to still the stronger throbs of his solitary heart. When he looked up, the stars were shining again in the dim and

dewy sky—the hills stood up, like watching Titans, clothed in the shadowy unformed garments of the early earth, and ghost-like in the darkness rose ancient tombstones, grey with years, and the green mounds of yesterday. The great, silent, conscious world, tingling with the spiritual presence which over-brimmed its mighty precincts—and the dead—the solemn sleepers who have lived, and do but wait to live again.

But there were the faint village lights close at hand, and the orphan to be sought for there, who was committed to his care. So the old man withdrew from the grave of Lilias, to seek her child.

The bearing of the Laird of Mossgray had in it so much of the graceful olden courtesy of the gentleman born, that it never failed to bring deference and attention. The very little inn which stood in the centre of the

hamlet was not much frequented by strangers. Wandering pedestrian tourists of the student or artist class, to whom its humbleness was a recommendation, did sometimes refresh themselves in its well-sanded kitchen; but the ruddy landlady had scarcely ever welcomed such a guest as Mossgray under her homely roof. So she ushered him into a little boarded room, of dignity superior to the kitchen, though communicating with it, and dusted a huge old-fashioned chair with her apron, and stood curtseying before him, waiting for his orders, and secretly cogitating whether there would be time to dress a fowl for supper, or if the universal ham and eggs would do.

But Mossgray was by no means concerned about supper. He was silent for a few moments, during which the comfortable hostess stood before him marvelling, and

when he did address her, it was to ask whether she knew a young Scottish lady, a Miss Maxwell, who, he believed, lived in the village.

The good landlady was a little shocked. What had the like of him to do with young ladies? but his grave face reassured her.

"And that will be the poor young creature that lost her mother, a fortnight come Friday, it's like?"

"Yes," said Mossgray, slowly, to steady his voice, "yes, she is an orphan—her mother is dead."

"Ay, sure; and I wouldn't wonder a bit," said the stout hostess, smoothing down her ample skirts, "if she didn't bide long behind her; for a thin long slip of a thing she is, and no more red on her cheek than the very snow, and I've heard say that such

like troubles run in the blood. There's the Squire's family down in the dale—you'll know them sure, better than the likes of me —they've all followed one another, for all the world like a march of folk at a funeral going to the grave."

"And is Lilias—is the young lady affected with this disease?" exclaimed Mossgray.

"The young lady, did you say, Sir? Why the poor girl had her bread to work for, like the rest on us—and a weakly white thing she was if there were ne'er another; but she thought herself a young lady sure enow, and what mun she do but go and be a governess, as they ca' it. Her mother was a prideful body, to have nothing, and so was Miss; but I say I'd sooner have my girl a dairy-maid any day, if Susan needed to go out of her father's house for a living, which she doesn't, thank Providence."

"But, my good woman," said Mossgray mildly, "Miss Maxwell has no intention of being a governess, I trust, as she has no need. You will oblige me, if you can tell me where I shall find her."

"Well, and that's just more than I can tell you, Sir; for the Rector's gone from home, and they say Miss went with them;—but if it's your pleasure to stay—"

"I will stay this night, if you can accommodate me," was the answer.

The landlady curtsied.

"I'll send up Susan to the Rectory for Mary, and mayhap she can tell."

In half an hour Susan was despatched, her mother in the meantime taking upon herself to prepare the unbidden supper; and in about an hour and a half after, Susan returned alone. The Rectory Mary

had deserted her post, and was now half a dozen miles away over the fell, visiting her mother, and the girl left in charge, had been fain to keep Susan for an hour's gossip to cheer her loneliness. She knew only that the Rector and her mistress had gone to Scotland; but as Scotland, in the reckoning of Susan of the inn, and Sally at the Rectory was a word of quite indefinite signification, meaning sometimes a village like their own, and sometimes enlarging into the dimensions of a dale, or of a great town like the picturesque one near them, which filled up to overbrimming their idea of "the world," the information thus obtained was anything but satisfactory. So Mossgray endeavoured to ascertain something further from the landlady.

"They came here eighteen months past,

come Whitsuntide. I mind it particular, because my Susan and more o' the young folks were up at the confirmation the Bishop had up yonder, in the town, the end of that summer; and it would have done any one's heart good to have seen my girl in her white muslin, and her cap, and all of them trooping down the dale in the fine morning. But the Scotch lady wouldn't have her daughter go, though the Rector took the trouble to talk to her himself. I donna understand such things, but mayhap, Sir, the like of you do that are learned, why the young Miss shouldn't have gone with the rest, like any other christian. But they were quiet, peaceable folks, no one can say again that; and except it were wandering about the dale, the old lady leaning heavy on Miss, and looking as faint when she came back as

if she had done a day's work, I know no pleasure they ever took young or old of them; and they cared about nought but books and the post. I have seen them sit on the brow yonder in the summer time reading for hours; and in the winter time I've looked in at the window passing by—not that I'm a prying body, or care about my neighbour's business, but only, there was nought like their ways in the whole dale—and there they would be, with a turf fire you could 'most have held in your two hands, one of them doing fine work, and the other reading; and beautiful Miss can work, Mary at the Rectory says, and it was all for some rich friends that sent them money now and again—though sure it wasn't much—but it's like you'll know, Sir?"

A painful colour was on the face of

Adam Graeme: "Poor, and in trouble and ye visited me not." He felt every word an accusation, and could scarcely answer "No."

"And every month or two—I donna know but what it was every month—Miss went by herself into the town to get letters: and I've heard say, she'd pay more for them than would have put a bit of something comfortable on their table many a day. They were from some far away part, and they came as regular as Sunday comes: but no one could tell who sent them, for she had ne'er a brother, and her father was dead. The Rector's lady took a deal of notice of Miss and her mother; not that she is one of that kind herself, for she's just a good easy creature, that doesn't trouble her head about learning; but she came from Scotland herself you know. I've heard Mary at the Rectory

say that the old lady had been in such a many places—never biding long in one, I reckon; and you know the old word, Sir, about the rolling stone. Well, they had been in this way more than a year—a good fourteen months it would be, for it was past Midsummer—when the old lady fell ill; and she kept on getting better and worse, better and worse, till a fortnight come next Friday when she died—and a week past on Monday they buried her. At the burial, I know for certain, Miss was like nought but a shadow, and just yesterday the Rector and his lady went off to Scotland and took her with them. I've heard Mary at the Rectory say, she was gone to be governess to the Rector's lady's sisters; but I donna know what's their name, nor where they live; and please, Sir, that's all I can tell you."

The talkative landlady recollected other scraps of gossip, however, before she suffered so good a listener to escape her. The subdued and quiet life of the mother and daughter—the proud poverty that made no sign—the privations which were guessed at —which perhaps were magnified—the mysterious letters—the little incidental and unconscious touches which revealed through a mist of verbiage, something of the second Lilias, in the fresh youth which knew no cares but those of poverty, and in the first paralysis and stupor of her heavy grief. But the other figure—the sad Naomi leaning on the girl's arm, and sinking, amid hardship and the chill pains of penury into a stranger's grave—every new touch did but deepen the sad cold colours of the picture, and this was the lofty Lily of the old man's dream—the

sunny and joyous daughter of Greenshaw.

The next morning Mossgray left the Cumberland glen, resolving, if his search did not prosper in Scotland, to return when the reverend ruler of the little dale should have returned to his flock and his dominions. He remembered, however, with annoyance, when he had reached Carlisle on his way home, that he had not ascertained the Rector's name. It had not been mentioned by his primitive parishioners, to whom "the Rector" was the title of titles; but Mossgray resolved to make immediate inquiry of Mrs. Fendie whose eldest daughter had married an English clergyman somewhere in this same district. He would write also to Walter Johnstone; he would advertise if other means failed, calling on the second Lilias to honour

the bequest her mother had made to him. The trust was more sacred now than ever ; it was enough that one had gone down uncomforted to the grave.

CHAPTER VI.

She was a sonsie mayden
Of substance eke, and weight,
Nae cares did vex her, nae thoughts perplex her,
And her name it was callit Kate.

OLD SONG.

On the following morning, a low pony carriage, very little above the rank of a gig, and packed in its lower departments with sundry empty baskets, drew up at the door of the Bank. It was the market-day in Fendie, and the strong rustic driver of the little vehicle seemed considerably more interested in the acquaintances whom he

noticed in the crowded Main Street, than in the young ladies whom he assisted to alight. The elder of them was about fifteen, a little older than Hope Oswald. She was a large, clumsy, heavy girl, with soft fair features, and sleepy blue eyes. The face was well enough, so far as mere form went, and had a certain slumbrous, passive good-humour in it, not unprepossessing; but speculation there was none under the heavy lids of those large eyes. The soft face had its tolerable proportions of white and red, but was informed by no inspiring light; for this was Hope Oswald's stupid schoolfellow—Miss Adelaide Fendie.

With her was a younger sister, a girl of ten, whose face only was less stupid, because it had a spitefulness and shrewish expression perfectly alien to the soft good-humour of Adelaide. They were both dressed after

that peculiar fashion which belongs to the caterpillar state (if we may venture on such an expression) of young ladies—in unhandsome dresses of faded colours, short enough to display quite too much of Adelaide's white trousers and considerable feet, and hanging wide and clumsily on shoulders which needed no addition to their natural proportions.

The Fendies of Mount Fendie were an old family; but Mr. George Oswald the banker, had also some pretensions to blood, and Mrs. Oswald was a laird's daughter; so there was no great derogation in the intimacy with which the youthful Misses of the more aristocratic house honoured the sprightly Hope. Miss Victoria was the more condescending of the two. She felt to the full the superiority of Mount Fendie, with its wide grounds and sweeping avenues

and lodges ornamented by the delicate taste of "mamma," and considerably despised the great stone building in the main street of Fendie, with the mechanical inscription of "Bank" over its stately portico.

Adelaide knew better; even in the dignified educational establishment in Edinburgh there was some certain degree of republicanism, and Adelaide had attained to a dull consciousness of Hope's superiority, and a habit of being guided by her will, much to the comfort of her slumbrous self, whom Hope managed to carry through scrapes and difficulties in a manner which even excited a faint degree of passive wonder in the sluggish inert nature, which could not comprehend her quick intelligence. And Adelaide liked Hope, and by good fortune did not envy her; and Hope had a sort of affection of habit for Adelaide, whose

dullness she laid siege to with girlish impetuosity, understanding it as little as her companion understood her; for Hope could not persuade herself that it was natural to be stupid, and so assailed the impenetrable blank of Adelaide's mind with all manner of weapons, but always unsuccessfully.

John Brown, the trusty major-domo of Mount Fendie, was bound for the market, and, not without some coaxing, had consented to bring the young ladies with him. John touched his hat in gruff good-humour as Hope Oswald's bright face looked out from the open door, and after depositing Miss Victoria safely on the pavement, drove off with a sigh of relief, muttering:

"That lassie'll be twenty stane afore she's dune growing. I wad as sune lift the brockit quey. Gude day to ye, Tam—hoo's the wife? Gar the laddie gie

the beast a feed — I haena muckle time."

With which prudent beginning John descended, and evinced his haste practically, by entering into a lengthened controversy with Tam Dribble, the master of a little inn which it pleased John to patronize. Tam was a man very great in the "affairs of the state," and the Provost of Fendie was his especial scapegoat for the sins of those in authority; so there was so much to be said for and against some recent act of this dignitary—for John Brown was a constitutional man, and defended the powers that be—that it was not until they had moistened their argument with a dram or two, and suffered the pony to make a very leisurely and substantial meal, that the factotum of Mount Fendie summed up with

a clap of his hands which made the room ring.

"Man Tam, ye're a born gowk—and it's a' havers—and here am I wasting guid daylicht listening to you. An it had been night, I might hae bidden to gie ye your answer—but me, that's a responsible man, and under authority—hout awa' wi' ye!"

With which triumphant conclusion, John Brown strode forth to the market.

"Oh, Hope! isn't he a great bear, that John?" exclaimed Victoria Fendie. "Adelaide asked mamma to let us come, and mamma never will do anything at first that we want; but we coaxed her, and then when she said we might go, we had to ask John Brown to take us—to ask John Brown, indeed!—only think of

ladies asking a servant! and mamma would not order him to do it. I know what I will do—I'll get some of Alick's powder and put it in the snuffers, and then I'll ask John to come and snuff the candles for me."

"Very well, Victoria," said Hope, "I'll tell John to-day."

"Oh, goodness, Adelaide, only listen—how ill-natured she is! I don't care—I'll do something; it's a great shame of mamma to make us ask John Brown."

"Hope," said Adelaide, "the new governess is coming to-morrow, and mamma says you're to come up and see her."

"Mamma only said she might come if she liked," interposed Victoria.

Adelaide paused to deliberate upon an answer.

"If I did not like to come sometimes to see Adelaide, Adelaide would not ask me," said Hope.

"But, Hope," said Adelaide, lifting her large dull blue eyes, "it's the new governess you're to come to see."

"Well, I know that; but I shall see you too, shall I not?"

"Yes," repeated the obtuse Adelaide; "but you're to come to see the new governess, mamma says."

Hope was seized with one of her fits of impatience. Why would Adelaide be so stupid?

"Shan't we tease her!" exclaimed Victoria, triumphantly. "Fred says he won't learn his lessons to a woman, and I won't learn any lessons at all, if I can help it, and mamma won't let me if I have a headache. Do you ever have any headaches, Hope?"

"No," said Hope, stoutly, "headaches! Miss Mansfield used to have them at school —you mind, Adelaide? but it's a great shame, and Miss Swinton says girls have no right to have headaches."

"Oh, Hope! 'you *mind*.' Mamma would whip me if I said 'you mind.'"

"*My* mother would not," said the resolute Hope, "and mind is a far better word than remember or recollect. It's only one syllable and it's our own tongue, and—it's a very good word."

"I think so too," said Adelaide, with an unwonted exertion, "because when a word's short, it's easier said."

Adelaide's sentence terminated abruptly in a peal of malicious laughter from Victoria.

"Well," said the elder sister, with some faint flush of anger, "I am sure Miss

Swinton used to say so—and you've no right to laugh, Victoria—I'll tell mamma."

"I don't care," was the response; "mamma is not so well pleased when you always talk about that stupid governess—you know that."

"Stupid governess!" Hope's eyes sparkled. "If you were not a child, Victoria," she said, with the dignity of a senior, "you would not speak so. Miss Swinton is a lady—Miss Swinton is a gentlewoman! I don't know any one like Miss Swinton, except mamma, and—"

"Oh, come, tell us—tell us!" cried Victoria.

Hope drew herself up.

"Except mamma and Helen — Miss Buchanan—but you don't know her."

"Yes I do—she keeps a school; yes I do—a governess and a schoolmistress—and

Hope does not know any other ladies! I hope I shall never be one of Hope's ladies."

"What are you doing now, Hope?" said Adelaide. "Mamma has made me begin to work a cover for something; I don't know what the shape of it will be, but it's all in bits like this, and mamma says it will be very pretty—and Charlotte's bringing such a load of music, and that governess!—you might come up, Hope, and help me, for I'm sure you're not doing anything yourself."

Hope acknowledged her idleness.

"No indeed, Adelaide; but I have only been two days at home; and—what's the use of working covers? I don't know why people labour at such things."

"Because their mammas make them," said Adelaide, gravely, and with a sigh;

"but I think I like it too, Hope, for it's very pretty, you know."

Hope shook her head. She had been visited several times of late by some grave ruminations on this subject, and began to feel that working covers, however pretty, was in reality a quite unsatisfactory mode of life. But the cogitations were inarticulate; they had attained no shape, except at present a decided disinclination to work at all.

"And, Hope," added Adelaide, "how long do you practice every day?"

"I don't practice at all," answered Hope.

The sleepy lids of Adelaide's eyes were elevated in wonder.

"Then what in all the world do you do?" exclaimed Victoria. "I should like to be you, Hope—I should like to play all day; but Adelaide thinks she is too old to play."

"I don't play all day," said Hope, with some indignation. "Yesterday I was at Friarsford with my mother, and at Mossgray—"

"Oh, Hope!" said Adelaide, "what makes you go to see that girl? she is only a farmer's daughter."

"I don't care for her now," said Hope, with some sadness; "but it's not because she's a farmer's daughter—it's because she is—I mean it's because *she* practises, and knits and works covers, and doesn't care for anybody—but never mind that. And then we went to Mossgray. We did not see Mr. Graeme; but there's a beautiful pony—the prettiest one ever you saw—and Mrs. Mense says I am to give it its name. What should I call it, Adelaide? come and help me."

Adelaide slowly shook her head—this

was a stretch of invention quite beyond her.

"Call it Mischief," suggested Victoria.

"Mischief," deliberated Hope. "No, I don't like that—I want a pretty name—give me a pretty name, Adelaide."

An idea gradually illuminated Adelaide's stolid countenance.

"Call it Pretty, Hope—that would do very well."

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed Hope; "you might call a lap-dog that, but a fine pony! so merry, and brisk, and lively—oh, no, no!"

"Call it after me," said Victoria.

"Mischief?" said Hope.

"No, indeed, not Mischief, but Victoria, or Adelaide, or—I have got it—I have got it!—call it Lillie, after our new governess."

"Is her name Lillie?" asked Hope.

"It's her first name — her Christian name," said Adelaide, "and Charlotte says she looks pretty, Hope; but she is so quiet and sad—you know she lost her mamma just a fortnight ago."

"And has she no home?" said Hope.

"No home? I am sure I don't know; Charlotte does not say anything about her home; only her mamma is dead, and she is very quiet, and looks pretty."

There was no more to be got out of Adelaide—she could only repeat her text, and wonder at the questions that sprang out of it.

"And is she coming with Mrs. Heavieliegh?" asked Hope.

"Yes—you know Mr. Heavieliegh is the Rector of the place her mother died in—but she came from Scotland at first, and

Charlotte was very good to her, and because mamma wanted a governess, Charlotte engaged her to come to the Mount."

Will Mrs. Heavieliegh stay long?" inquired Hope.

The conversation was getting low, Victoria being busily employed at the other end of the room, endeavouring with all her might to destroy some favourite plants of Mrs. Oswald's.

"Not just now—but do you know, Hope, Alick is coming next summer, from India, where he was sent with his regiment, and mamma will give parties, and perhaps a a ball—a real ball, Hope!—and you must be there. Oh, we shall be so happy!"

"Is he coming to stay?" asked Hope.

"I don't know—mamma didn't say; but she said there was to be a ball, and that Alick would perhaps bring some officers with

him. I only wish the time were come—shall you not be glad, Hope?"

"If my mother will let me go, I shall like it very well," said Hope; "but about the new governess, Adelaide—is she to teach you?"

"Mamma says so," said Adelaide; "but I think I don't need any more teaching—do you, Hope? after having had to learn such quantities of things. I am sure I wish mamma would just try it herself."

Hope was not quite inclined to acquiesce in this conclusion; but there was no possibility of keeping up an argument with Adelaide, who had nothing to add to her first sentence on any subject, but merely the trouble of repeating it. So Hope wisely went to seek her mother, and to suggest the preparation of some juvenile lunch for her friends, which speedily made its appearance

in the substantial form of bread and butter, jam and fruit—healthful dainties which were plentifully discussed by the visitors. John Brown arrived very shortly after, with the pony carriage, the baskets in which were no longer empty, and having with some difficulty hoisted the young ladies in, drove them away, leaving Hope pledged for "the day after to-morrow, to come and see the new governess."

END OF VOL. I.

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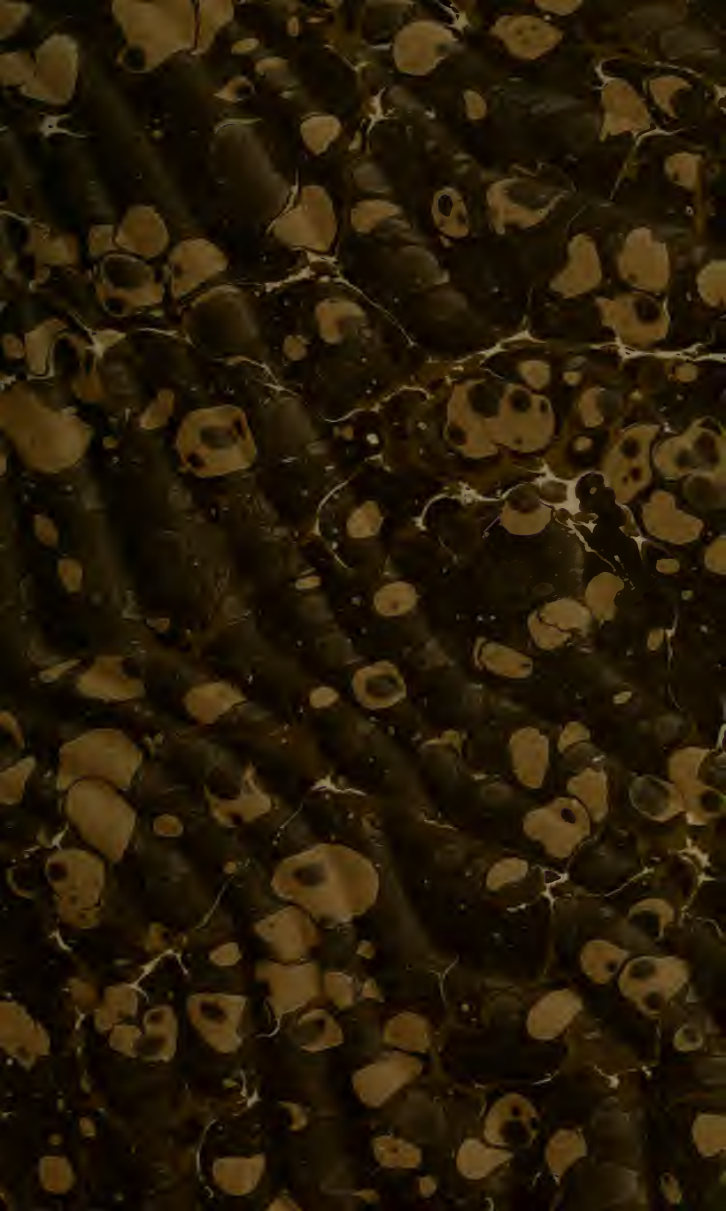

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